SCORN

THE ART OF THE GAME

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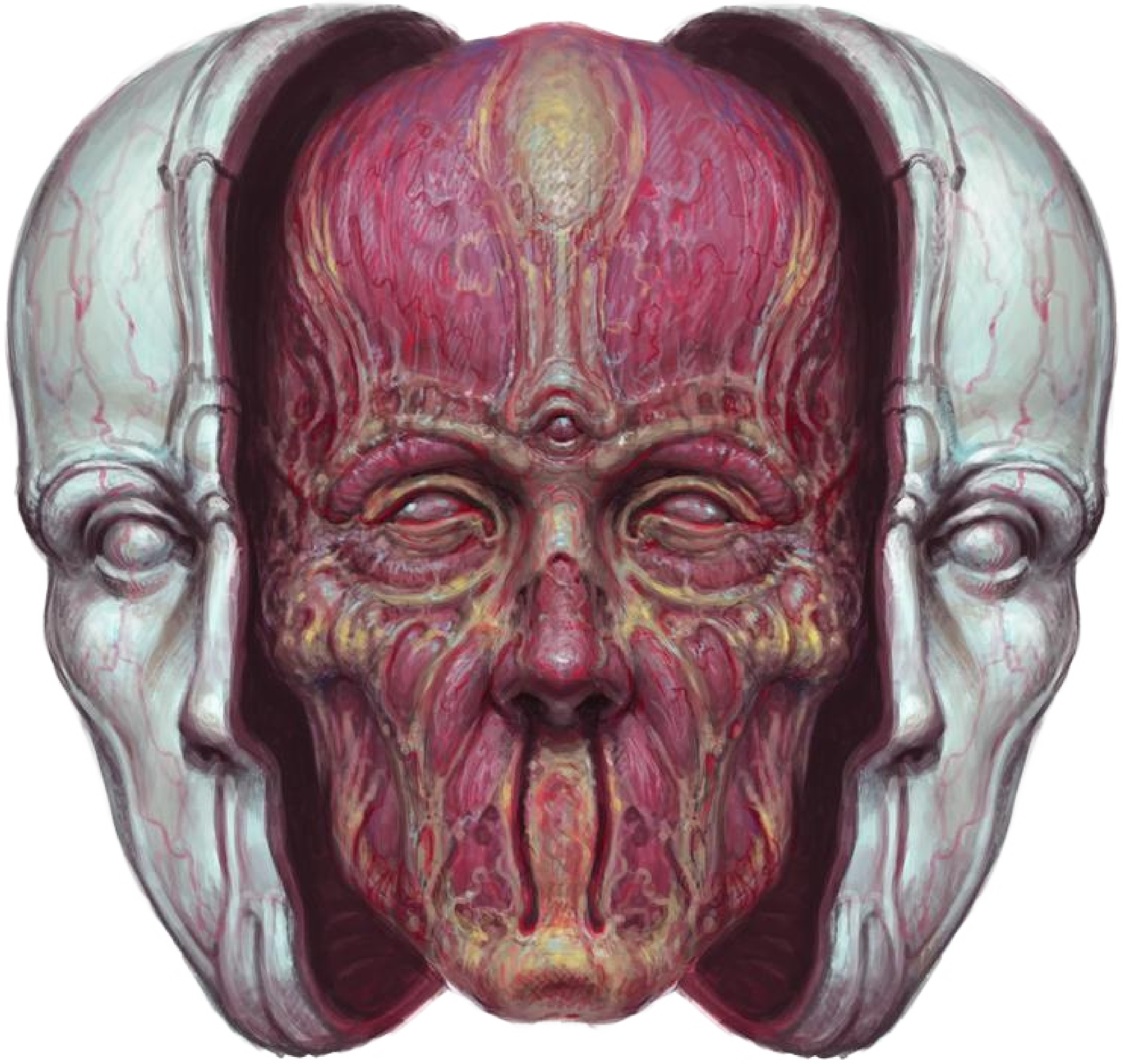

MATTHEW PELLETT

TITAN BOOKS

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INTRODUCTION

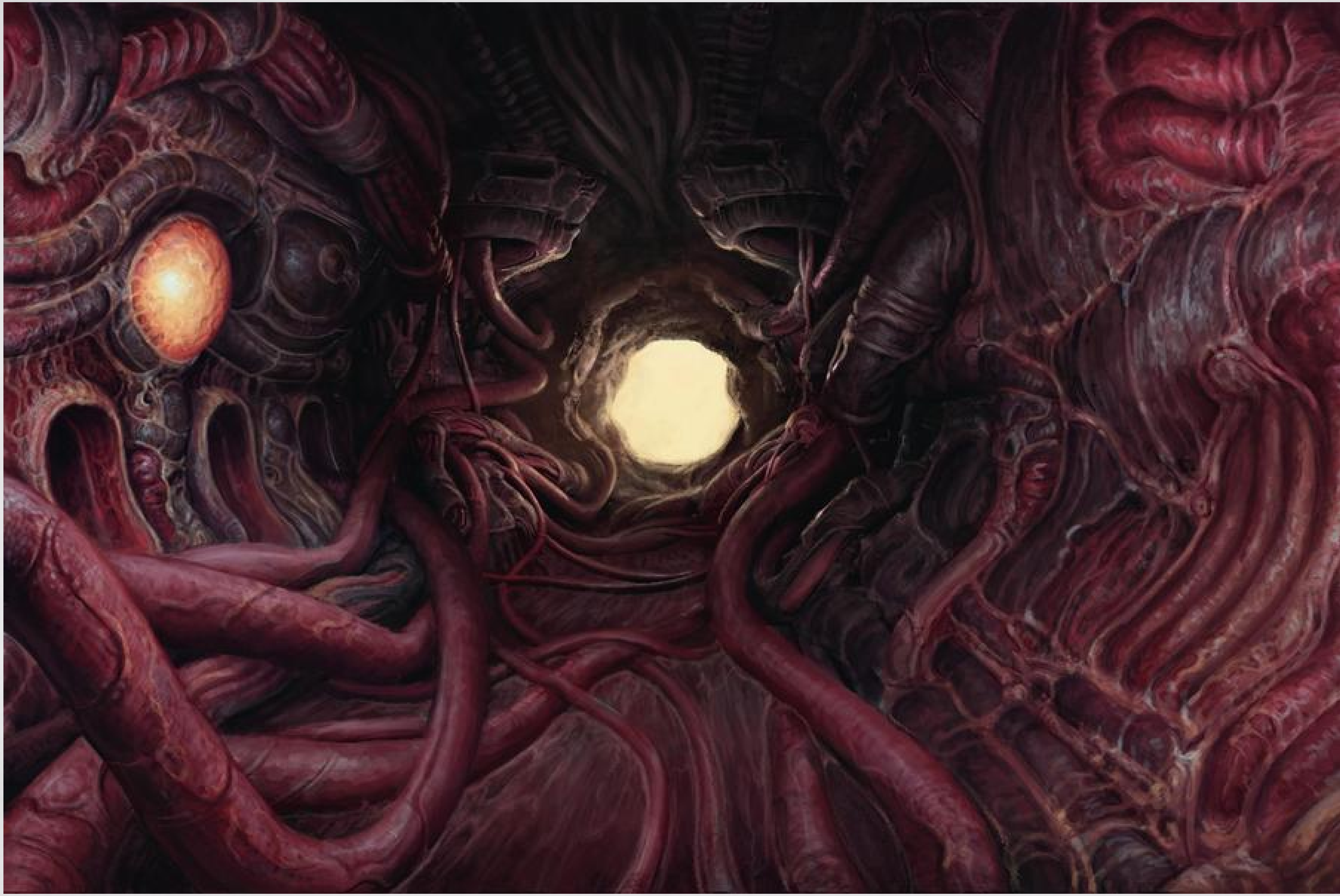
Mankind's fascination with horror stretches back hundreds of years. Through campfire stories, books, films, and video games, we've endeavored to scare with, and in turn be scared by, the unexpected, the unexplained, and the unimaginable.

Part of that fascination comes down to there being few absolutes in horror. One person's fear may be deemed ridiculous by others. Stories or situations that creep and crawl beneath somebody's skin could very easily have no effect on somebody else. The thrill of a scare may be followed by relief that it's over, or lingering unease and haunted memories. Bloody slasher films and subtle, subversive psychological thrillers are both classed as horror, but the two approaches are so different to the point of being unrelated.

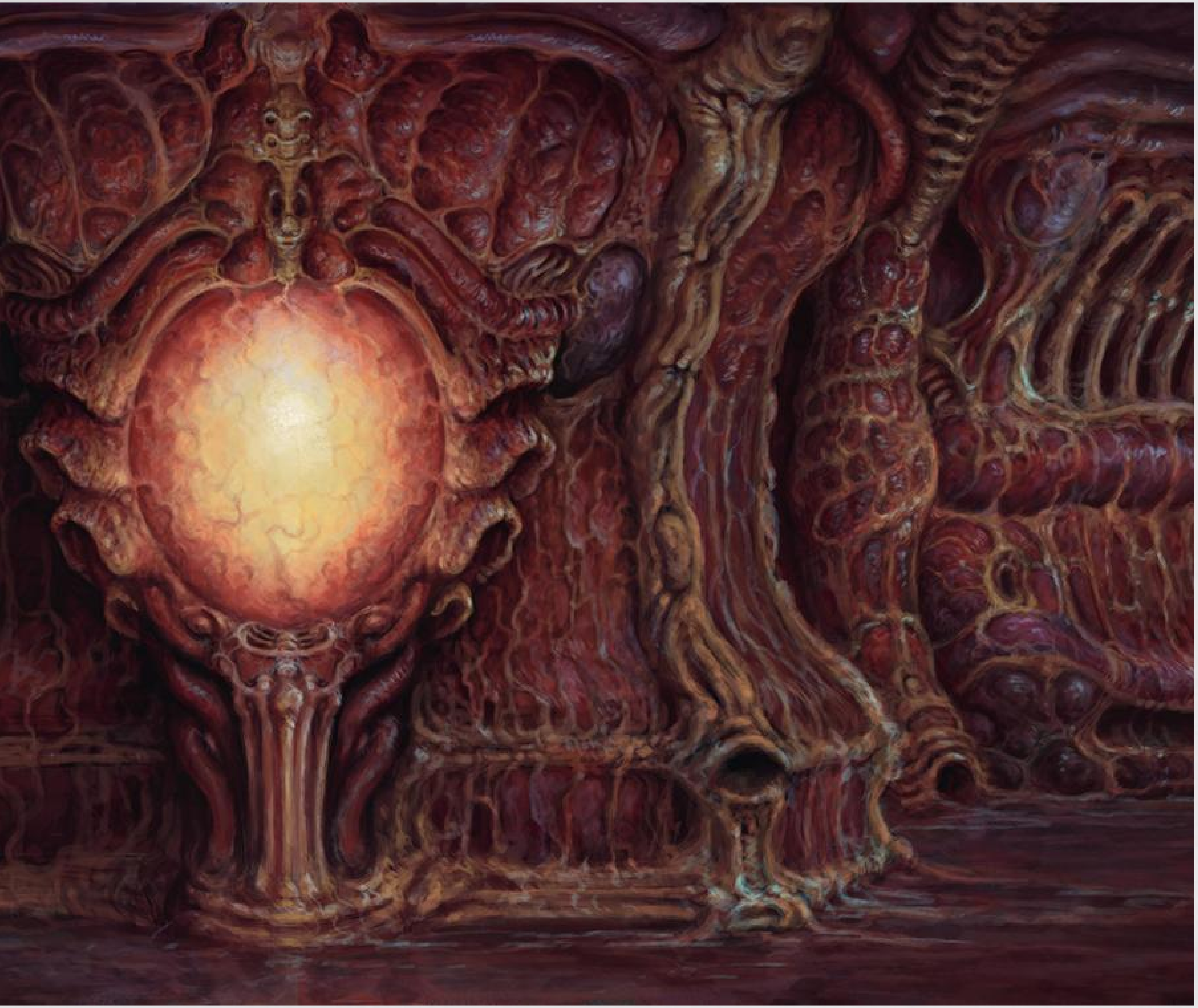
In *Scorn*, Serbian developer Ebb Software took a very specific journey for its interpretation of horror. CEO and game director Ljubomir Peklar wanted to make a game with no direct comparison. He envisioned a first-person adventure that could make players feel unsettled not with explicit displays of gore—though *Scorn* doesn't shy away from some gruesome moments—or through intense action sequences, but primarily by players studying and being immersed in environments that mix the familiar with the unknown.

"Odd shapes and somber tapestry" is how Ebb Software defines the building blocks of *Scorn*'s universe; a Gothic and surrealist biomechanical vision designed by concept artist Filip Acovic with the intent of fascinating and confounding. Indeed, the idea of the "unexplained" is so entrenched within *Scorn*'s design that it even applies to the development team itself.

"We abandoned the notion that we are going to understand everything we see in the game," says Acovic about the early days of embarking on a journey to craft a world like no other. "It's not just the player who is



RIGHT For decades, games have explored the idea of players being trapped inside a giant living creature. *Scorn* takes a different path. Players explore constructed, mechanical spaces, where the building blocks for these structures and mechanisms happen to be organic matter.



going to experience this; it's us also, and we made it. That's particularly hard for some people to accept. They tend to require some explanation: 'How was this done, who did this, and for what purpose?'"

Scorn's genesis isn't one of meticulously mapped out plans, then, but of themes that Peklar wanted to express and experiment with. "There wasn't a well-defined story," says Acovic. "It was a thing of pure inspiration: he [game director Ljubomir Peklar] presented ideas to me, and then we started talking. I made a few early pieces to get a feel of what the world would be like and how it would look."

Those themes number in the dozens. Many are only apparent in certain locations or items or creatures, but three of the core themes that act as umbrellas over the whole project are ones of existence, entropy, and the relationship between human beings and technology.

"You are just born into this conundrum, like we all are," says Peklar of that initial theme of existence. "And everything is related to our own existence," This tether to our own existence is crucial. In the years since *Scorn* was first unveiled, many people have suggested its world is alien. "It's not," confirms Peklar. "It's an extrapolation of our world, we just push it to the limits."

Peklar views the convergence of humans and technology as an important offshoot of that first theme. "Are we losing ourselves and our own essence?" he asks. "Are we being overwhelmed by technology?" It's these questions that led to the team studying H.R. Giger (1940–2014), the creative visionary behind the *Alien* films. Many artists and creators look towards the work of Giger as a first step, but end up with visions far removed from those of *Scorn*. Peklar believes the reasoning for this is clear and all stems from motivation.

"Giger's work was never chosen as an inspiration because it looked interesting or featured cool-looking imagery. Most people don't know how to read his art properly," says Peklar. "We wanted to explore similar themes and it was just a logical step to go there. Giger's pretty much it if you want to explore fusion of mankind and technology, or sexuality and technology. Many people like xenomorphs and that's it, but there's so much more to Giger's art."

Peklar and Acovic would rather look past *Alien*'s iconic xenomorph design and instead study the film's Space Jockey: the pilot of the crashed spaceship on LV-426. "The Space Jockey is mysterious," grins Peklar. "It's dead. You can construct many different stories about it, but you don't know anything, really. That's what's interesting. The mystery is what gets your mind percolating and reflecting." For Acovic, it was the Space Jockey's visual identity rather than its mystery that played a big part in weaving the fabric of *Scorn*'s concept art. "The Space Jockey is particularly interesting in the aesthetic sense of what we were trying to do, because you aren't sure what you are looking at," he says. "He seems to be fused with the chair. It is indistinguishable. The technology and the living tissue all looks as if it's part of one

LEFT Unconventional construction materials and methods turn even the most standard wall into a feature. Scorn's pacing affords players the freedom to meticulously study their surroundings without fear of retribution.

thing. You can't really separate the technology from the biology of the environment, and it's exactly the same as what we're trying to do."

Everything within *Scorn* abides by this idea of solid materials impregnated with organic growths. Weaponry, walls, control panels, statues, doors… the list goes on. Throughout this book you'll see depictions of items and buildings of all shapes and sizes, all conceived as natural fusions of organic matter and technology. From top to bottom, the universe is a biomechanical construct, and it's one ravaged by decay.

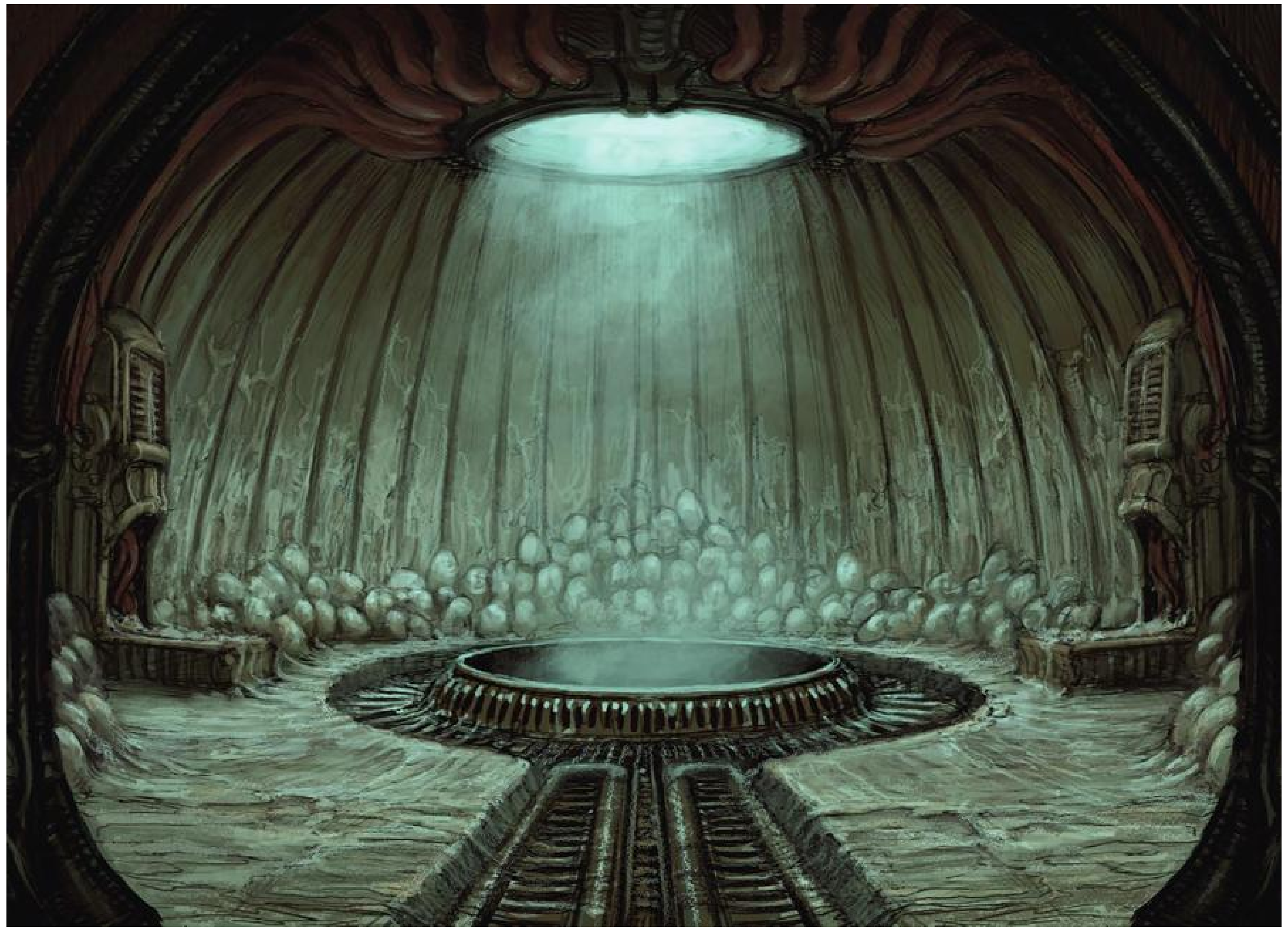
The theme of entropy forms a core component of the protagonist's design, feeding directly back into the existence theme, yet it's also vitally important for the overall universe. "The whole world is that way," says Peklar. "The idea of a world in its final stages is very compelling."

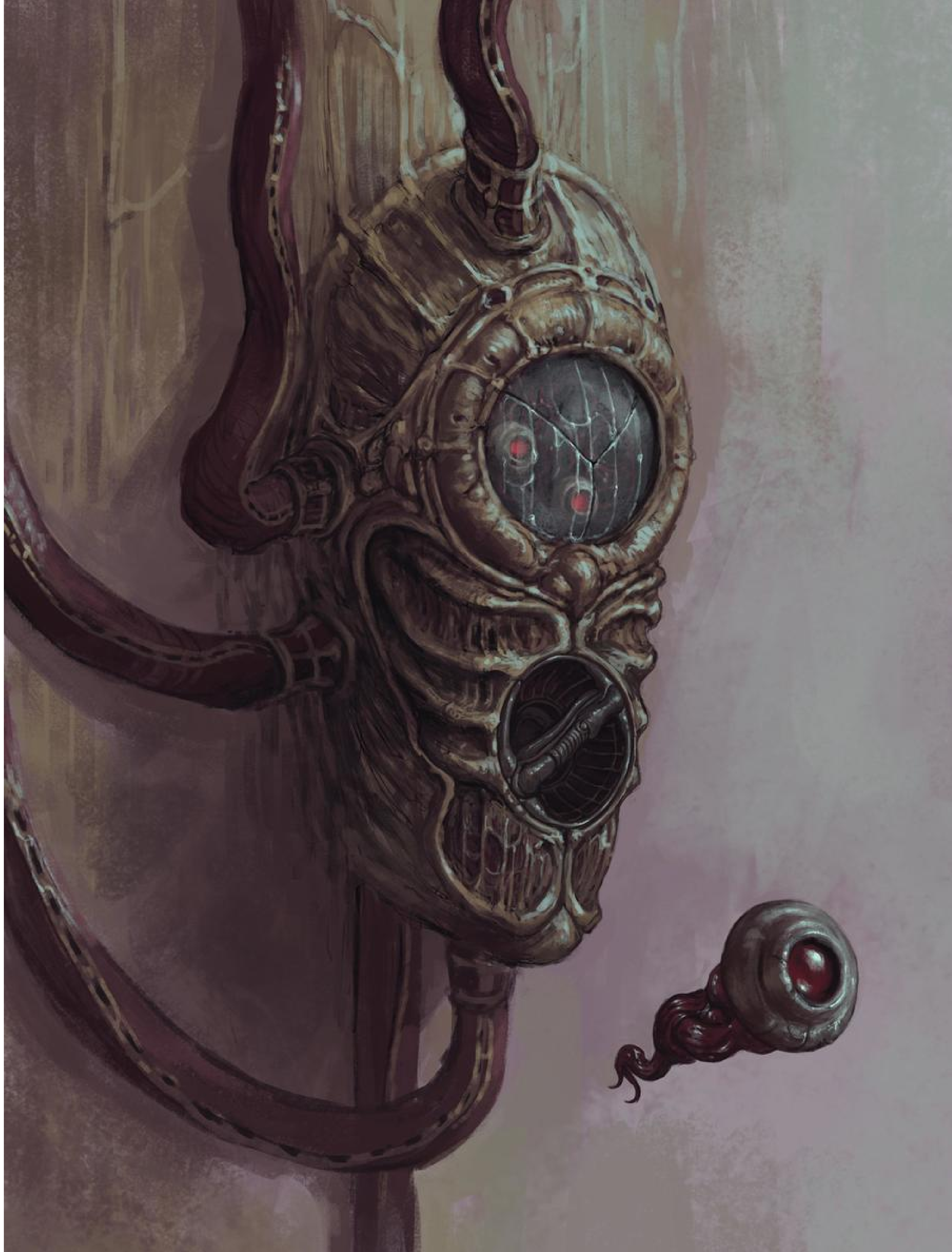
Scorn's biomechanical world can be considered as a body stretched out on a gurney, quietly undergoing rigor mortis, muscles locked stiff and microorganisms adjusting to their new, quieter surroundings-turned-food source. You, as the player, have ventured over and given it a violent shake for one final death rattle, rousing long-dormant mechanisms from eternal slumber for the final time. Your interruption is but a temporary disturbance in the decaying process, and it's in this depiction of putrescence where *Scorn*'s second major outside influence is most apparent.

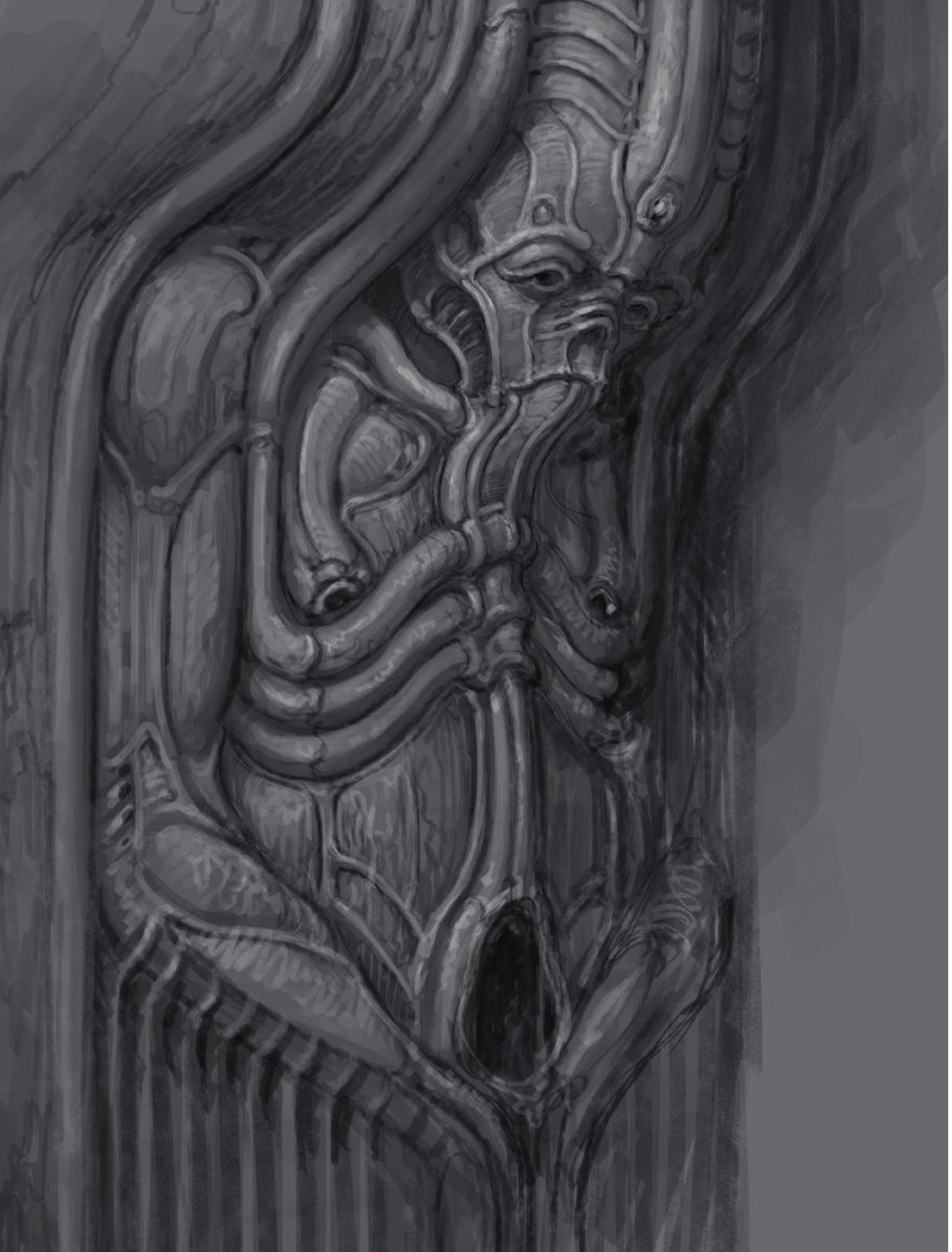
"The key visual representation of decay in *Scorn* is informed by Beksiński," says Filip Acovic, meaning Zdzisław Beksiński

RIGHT Every mechanism within Scorn's world needs to adhere to the universe's biomechanical laws. Here you can see fuses that connect into sockets via optic nerve-like tendrils, with organic tubing carrying signals off to other areas.

BELOW While bioluminescence is sometimes used to illuminate dark corners, explorable spaces are designed around the availability of external light sources whenever possible.







OPPOSITE References to H.R. Giger's Space Jockey from *Alien* (1979) are most apparent in Scorn's reliefs. Remove this hard surface layer and you'll find tissue and organs lurking beneath.

(1929–2005), the Polish painter and sculptor whose work on dystopian surrealism is the DNA from which *Scorn*'s aesthetic was assembled. "The way he depicted his worlds was never meant to be realistic," Acovic continues, "but it conveys decay really well and it's extremely expressive. Everything merges together, forms become indistinguishable, cracked, hollow, and slowly rotting away in an almost spider web-like pattern. His vision helped us achieve the look and feel we were aiming for."

In our own world, organic decaying processes see muscular matter first stiffen after death, then relax and, eventually, liquefy. In Beksiński's worlds, these final two steps don't happen: liquids coagulate and then calcify, while toughened, atrophied matter doesn't dissolve but instead peels and flakes away. Nightmarish visions of dried world husks dominate his work, and it's clear to see the artistic throughline from his paintings to *Scorn*'s universe.

Beyond Giger and Beksiński, it's much tougher to pinpoint specific inspirations for *Scorn*'s concept artwork, with good reason: there aren't many. Concept artist Filip Acovic deliberately avoided referencing other artists during the concept phase to ensure his work wasn't overtly affected by outside sources. Both Acovic and Peklar can name long lists of film directors, authors, and philosophers, as well as other artists—David Cronenberg, David Lynch, Dario Argento, Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, J. G. Ballard, Thomas Ligotti, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Ernest Becker, and Sigmund Freud all deserve credit here—whose bodies of work played a part in *Scorn*'s genesis as general stimuli, but never as referenced materials. "There's a wealth of visual information I've stored into my brain over the years just through watching movies, and reading books and comics," says Acovic. "You're being influenced all the time, but I avoided seeking explicit inspiration whenever I could."

Keen to flush his mind of as much outside interference as possible, Acovic began the *Scorn* conceptualization process by designing the game's protagonist and used these images as launchpads for the rest of the project. "It was all about designing a visual language that would inform everything, which is why we began with the main character," he says. "We designed the whole world around him because we wanted to avoid familiar tropes in horror and science fiction, and instead take a more surrealist approach."

Iteration was key to success. Concept pieces that felt too recognizable as real-world items or structures were quickly amended or outright rejected. At first this brutal approach led to many discarded designs, but the rejection rate eased up over time. "It gets progressively easier, and after a while you just instinctively know what looks right and what is completely wrong," reflects Acovic on the challenge of shaping *Scorn*'s vision across the years of development.

This instinctual thematic approach, freed from as many outside influences as possible, may be unconventional, but an unconventional approach is what was required to design a universe steeped in visual concepts previously unseen. The result of this approach is a unique and expressive universe that's open to each player's interpretation. "It would be nice if players discover the themes we've added," ruminates Ljubomir Peklar, "but if they see something else, that's equally valid. People's education and view on life will be imbued in the visuals in some way; it's not always about what is happening in the game, but how it makes you feel."

THE PROTAGONIST

THE PROTAGONIST

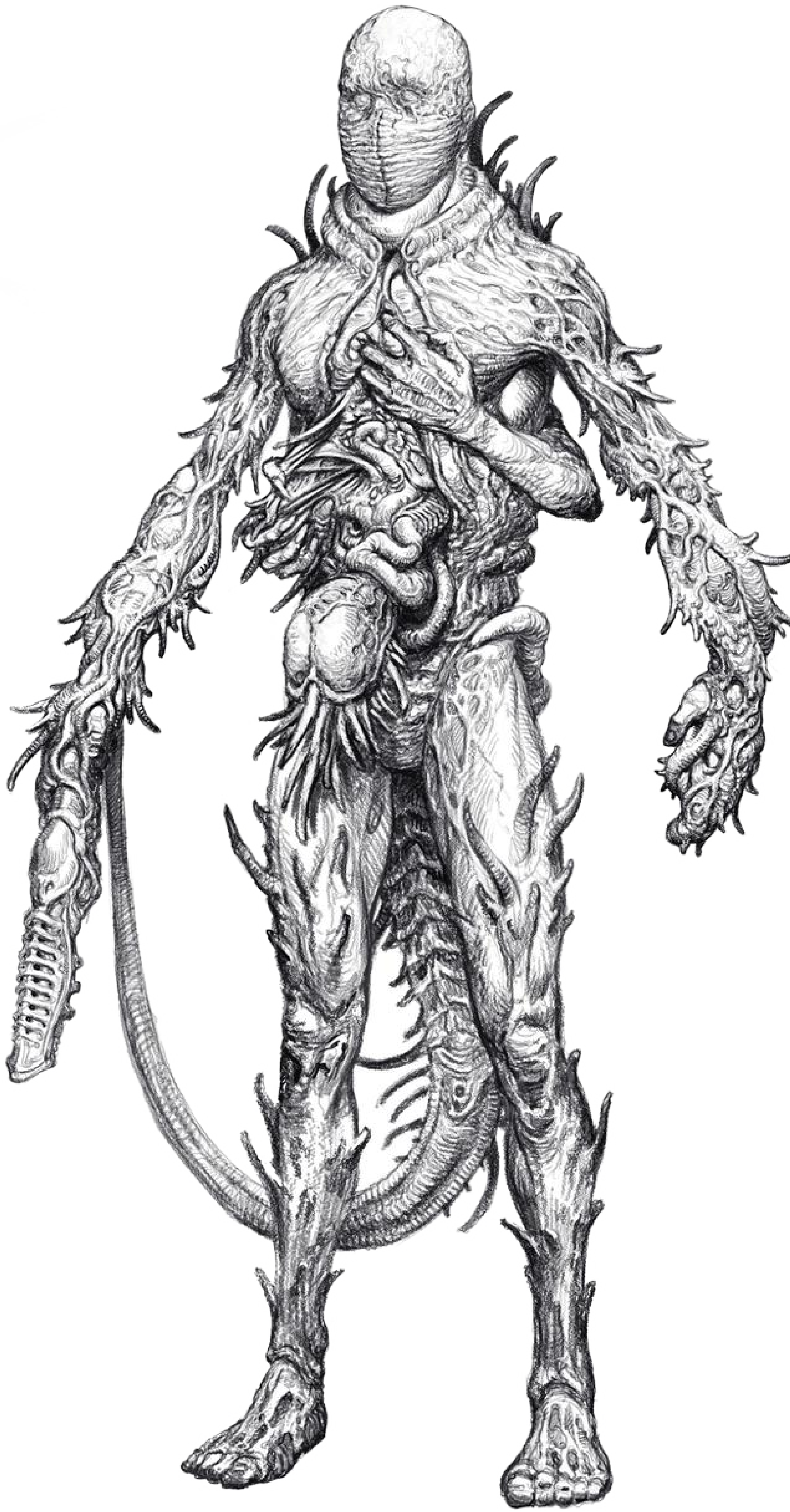
Every project has a beginning, and for *Scorn* this came in the form of its protagonist. Before concept work began on the enemies, the weapons or even the locations, *Scorn* was given form through its main character as the team sought to define the ideas they wanted to express.

Scorn's premise is built atop a collection of themes, and one in particular sparked the protagonist's design. "The basic idea was about physical embodiment and being (existing in the world)," says game director Ljubomir Peklar. "We wanted to show what it means to have a body in this world, and how it relates to the world." To capture this idea a first-person view felt like the only camera option for Peklar to consider ("because that's how we work as a bodied entity," he says). With this established it was important to not fall into the trap of reducing the main character to a pair of disembodied hands and legs, and to instead ensure his entire body could be used as a tool. That's in part achieved through general game mechanics and animations—interactive world features that demand players insert limbs into consoles, as an example—but also through character design that enables players to inject large rods into their own forearms, or subjects their bodies to strange and uncomfortable situations.

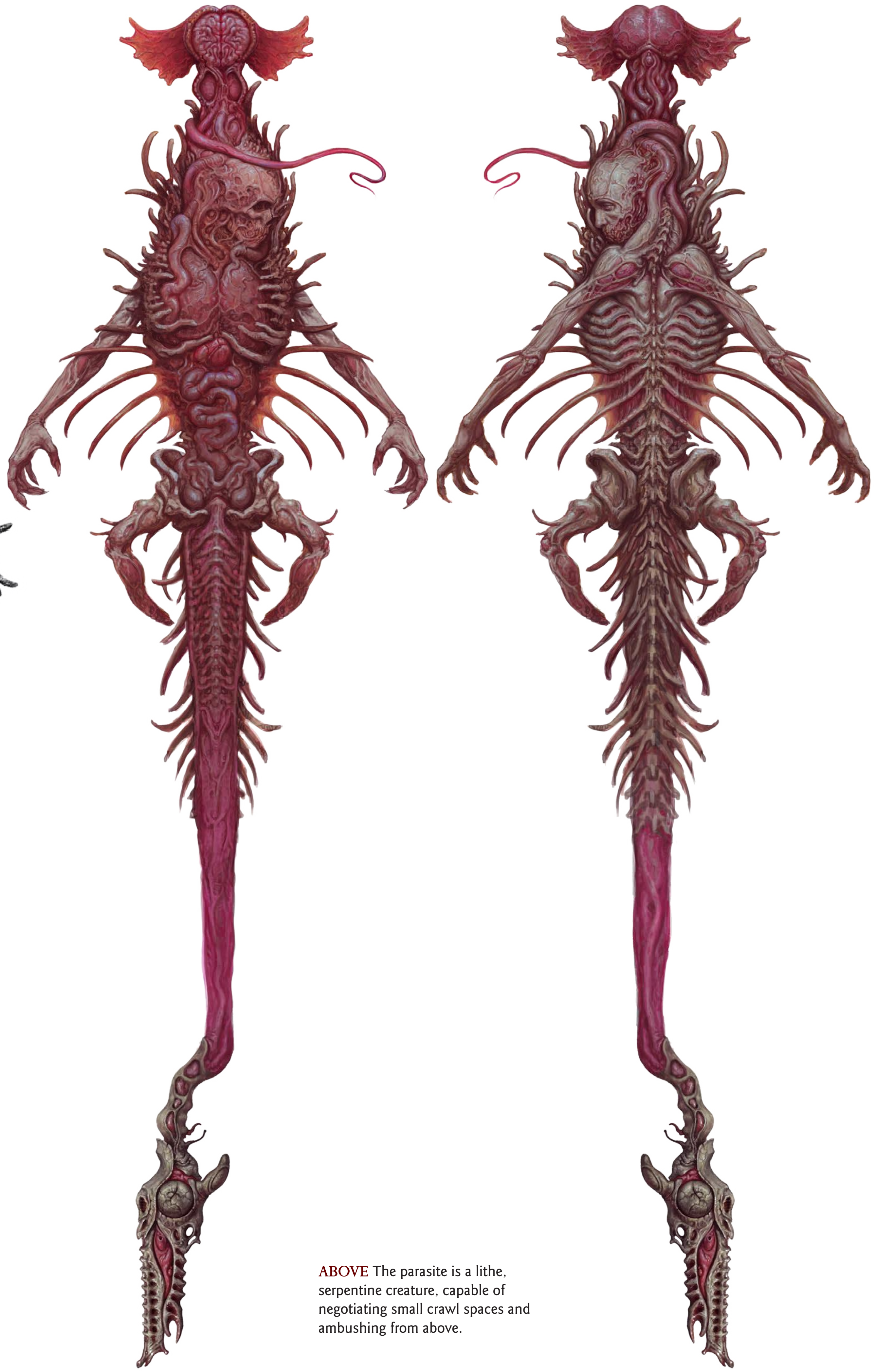
"Our protagonist is humanoid," says Peklar. "We wanted to express features that are human, but we took some liberties and over-exaggerated elements so certain themes show through. You should be aware of your body at all points in the game because your relationship to the world is going to happen through your body." This is why, during all times when players are in control, it's possible to look down and see the effects of various afflictions on the protagonist's torso.

Beyond being, the second protagonist theme Ebb wanted to embrace was one of entropy: of bodies getting progressively sicker and decomposing. "Being trapped in a rotting prison," is how Acovic describes it, citing "fragility" and "vulnerability" as essential characteristics that played into his artwork. Many early character designs were either amended or rejected simply because the forms looked too strong.

The third and final theme critical to *Scorn*'s leading role is one of rebirth. "The idea of being reborn is more potent than being born, because you change drastically, and you are aware of the changes" Peklar says. "I wanted to explore losing control over your body. So that's why the parasite exists, because it's taking control of you and all your functions."



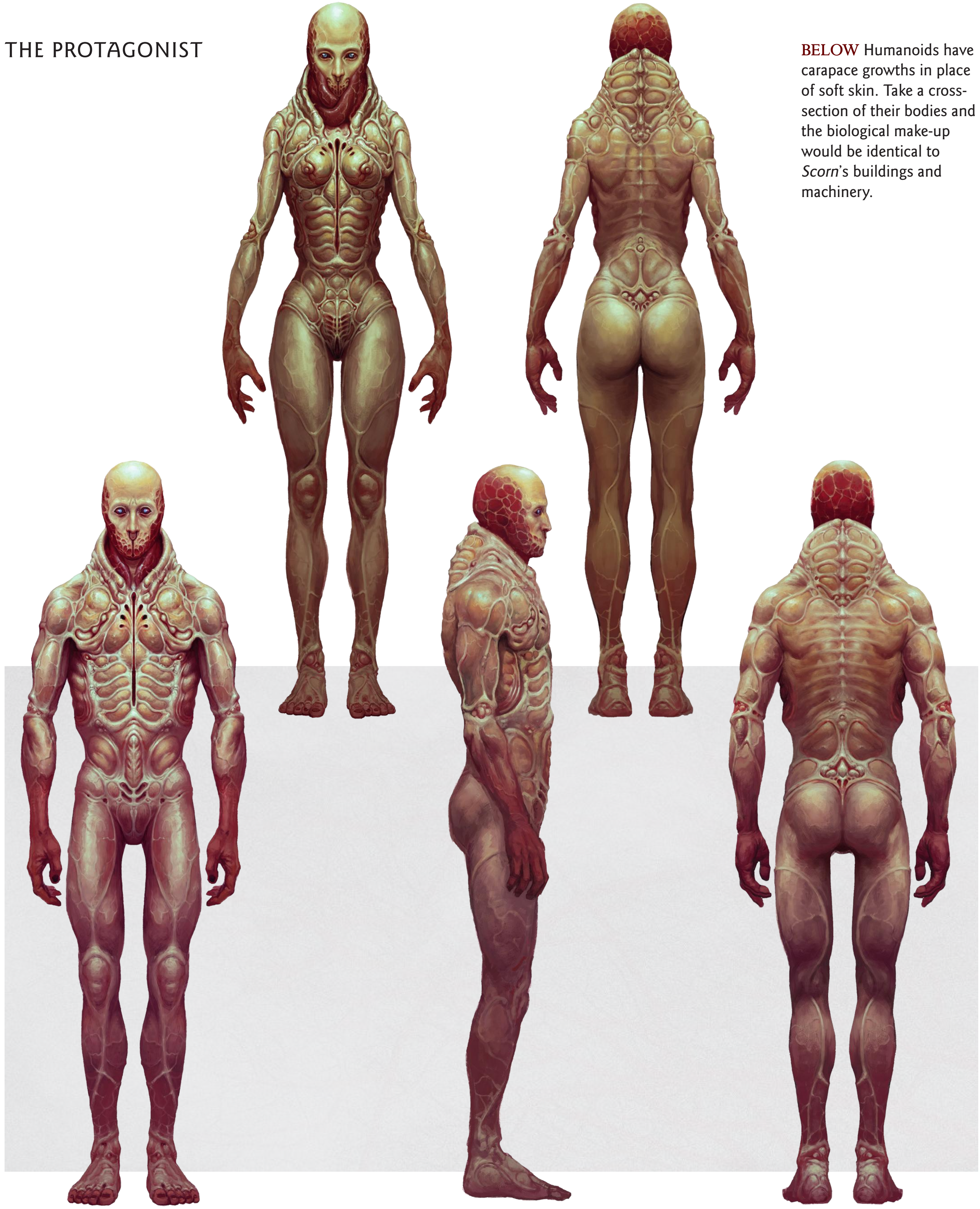
RIGHT Emphasizing weakness over strength in the protagonist's build was essential to ensure players would feel fearful of their time tip-toeing through Scorn's world.

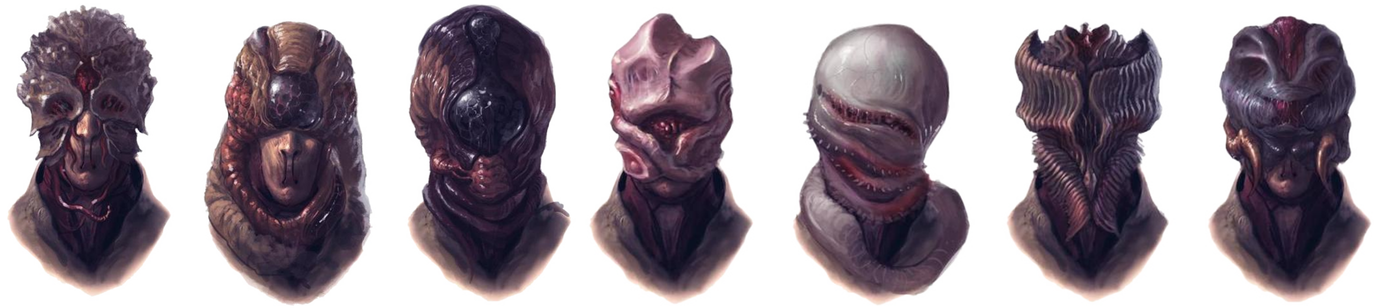


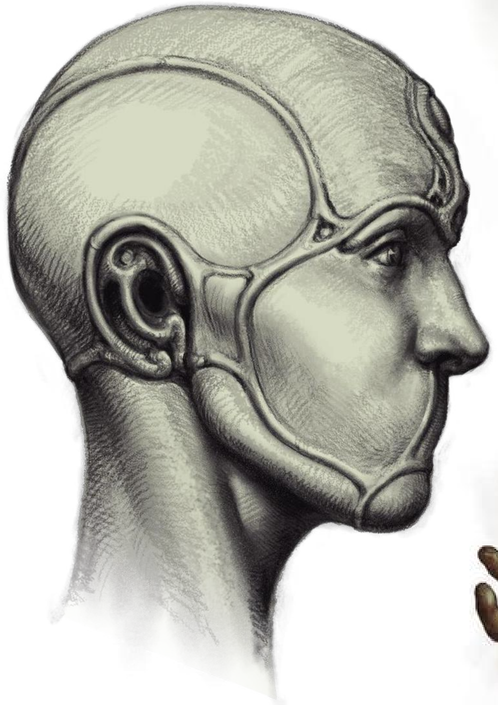
ABOVE The parasite is a lithe, serpentine creature, capable of negotiating small crawl spaces and ambushing from above.

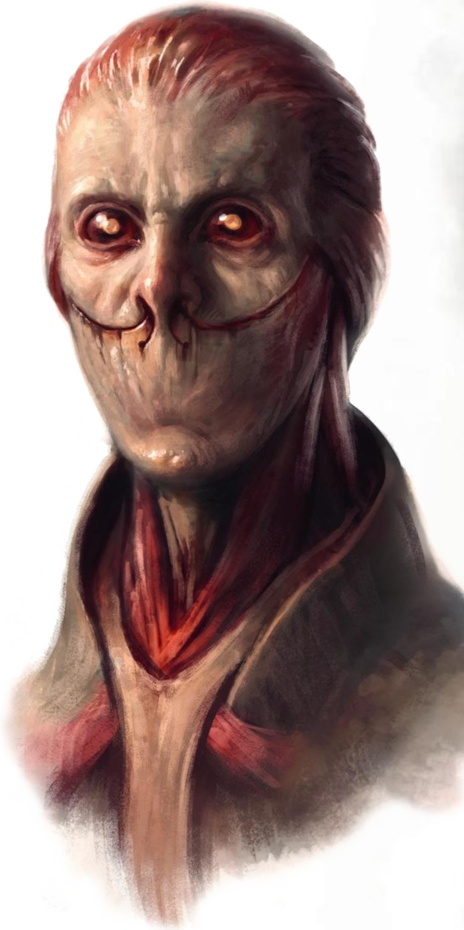
THE PROTAGONIST

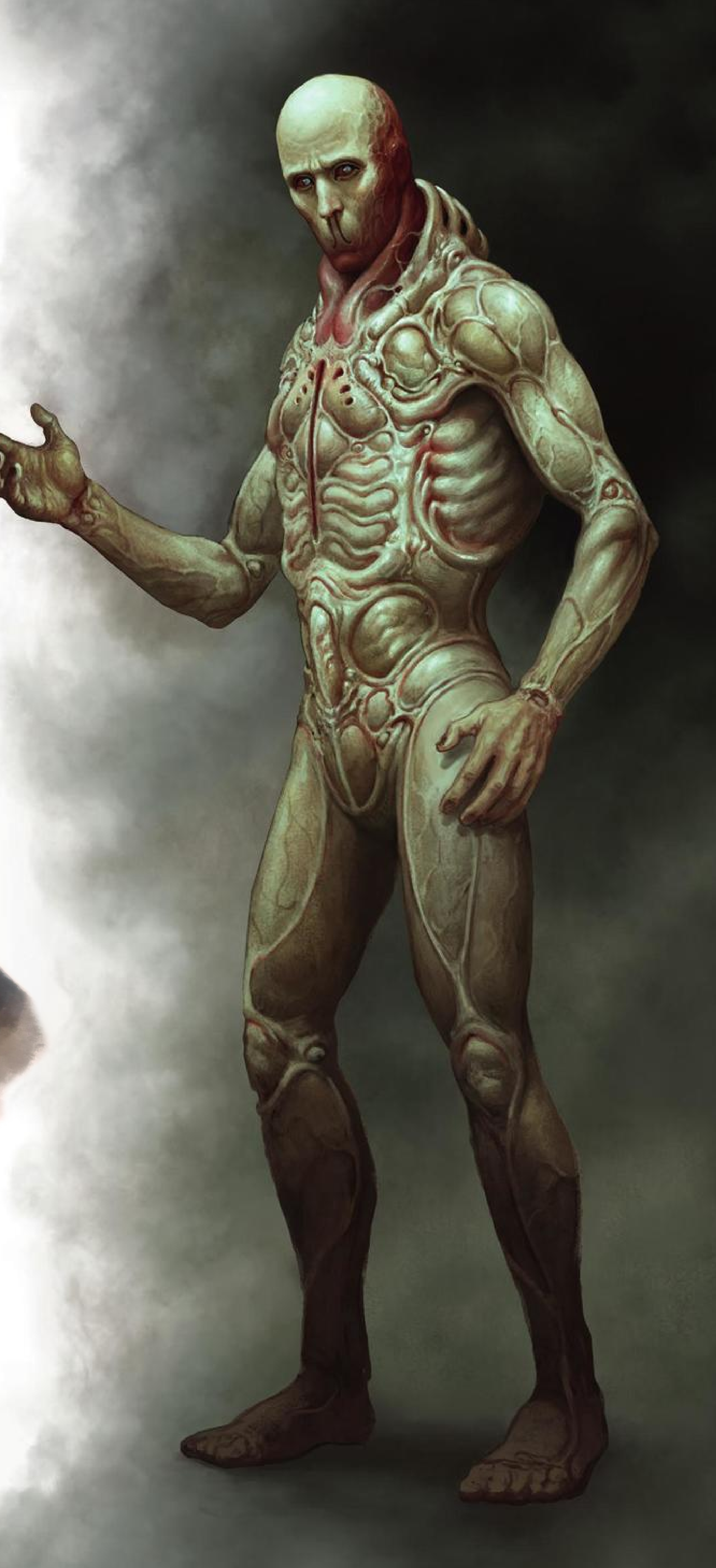
BELOW Humanoids have carapace growths in place of soft skin. Take a cross-section of their bodies and the biological make-up would be identical to *Scorn*'s buildings and machinery.



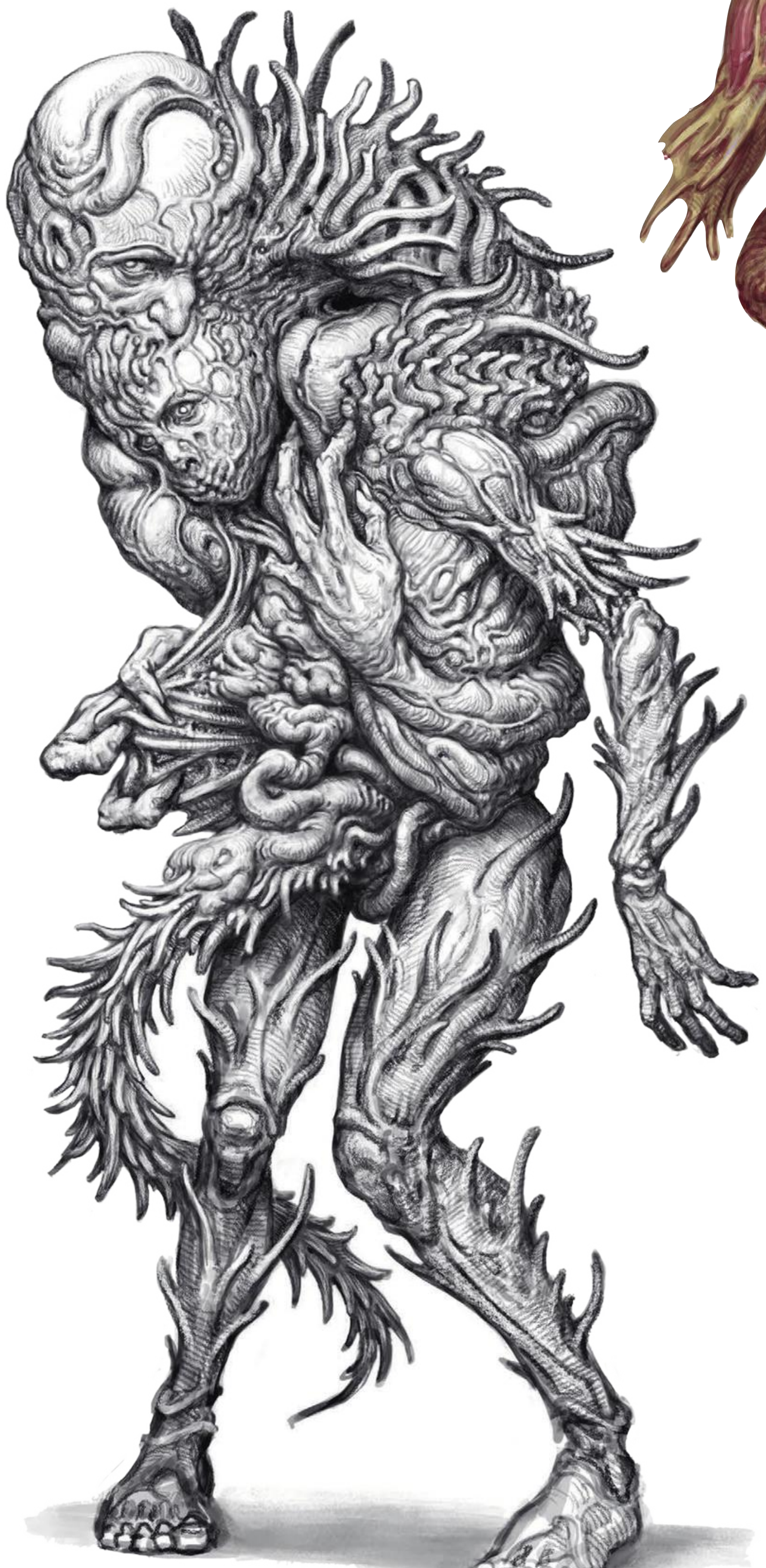


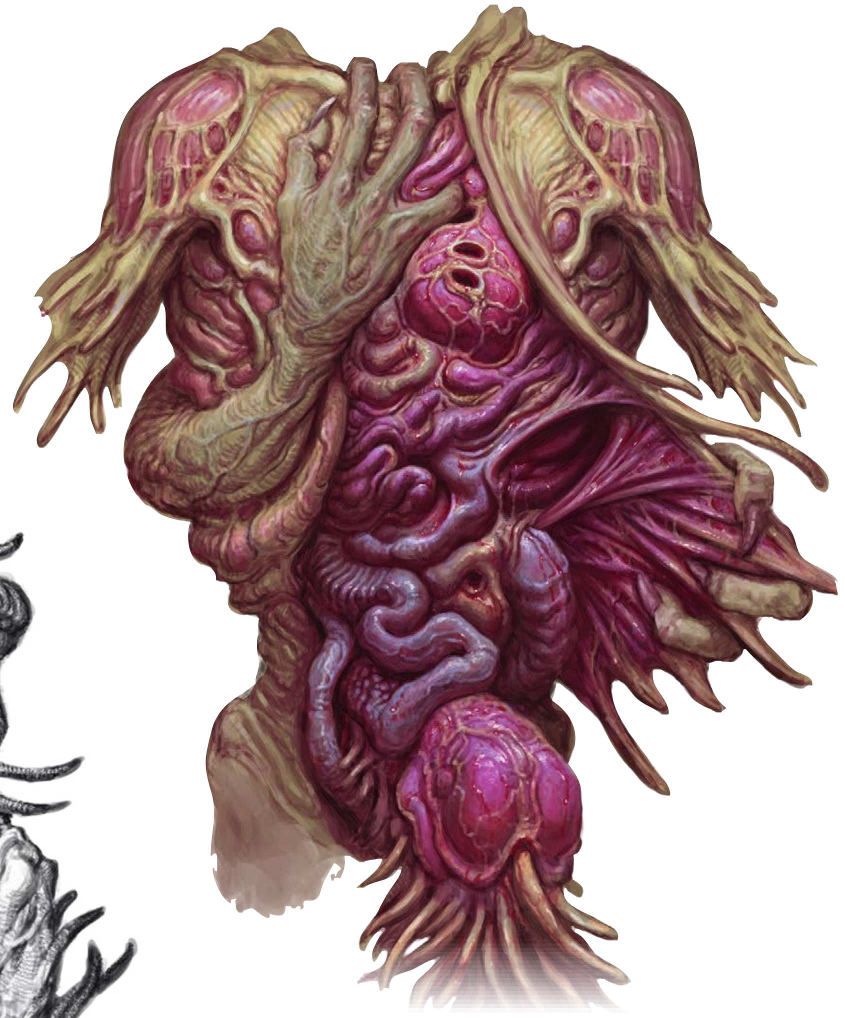






ABOVE Pinning down which features to enhance or leave recognizably humanoid took many iterations. "These are only a fraction of the early concepts," shares concept designer Filip Acovic. "Some of the designs were really far out. They strayed too much from our core concepts by being too weird and not relatable enough."





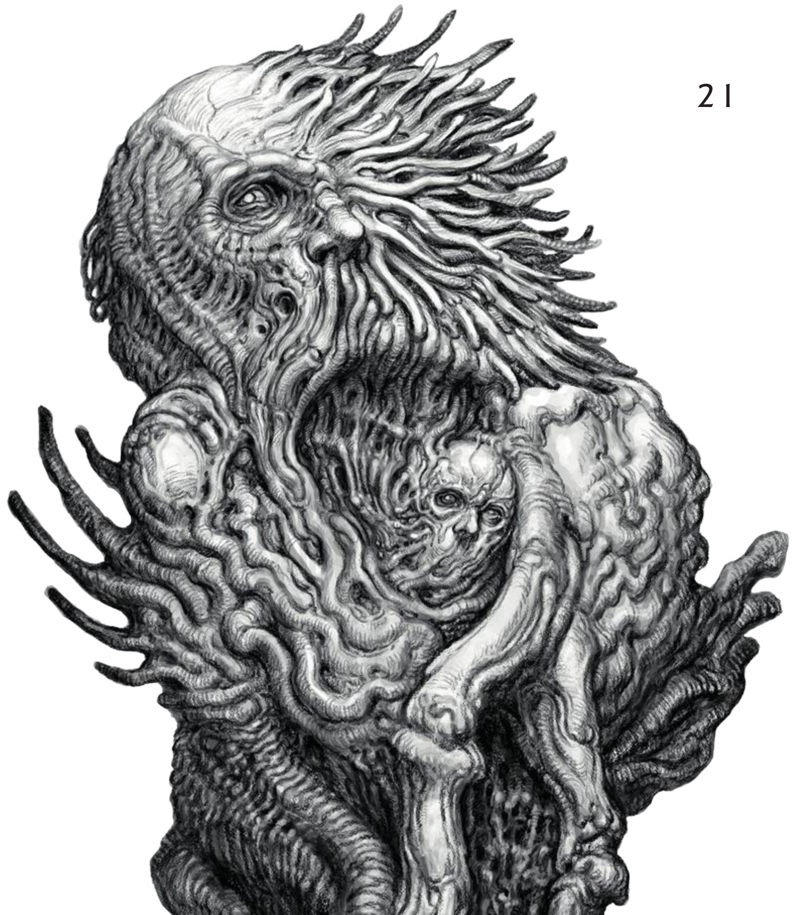
LEFT AND ABOVE When the parasite latches on, its talons hook into the player's torso and begin to slowly pry open the chest cavity. Players are always free to look down and witness the progress of this defilement first-hand.

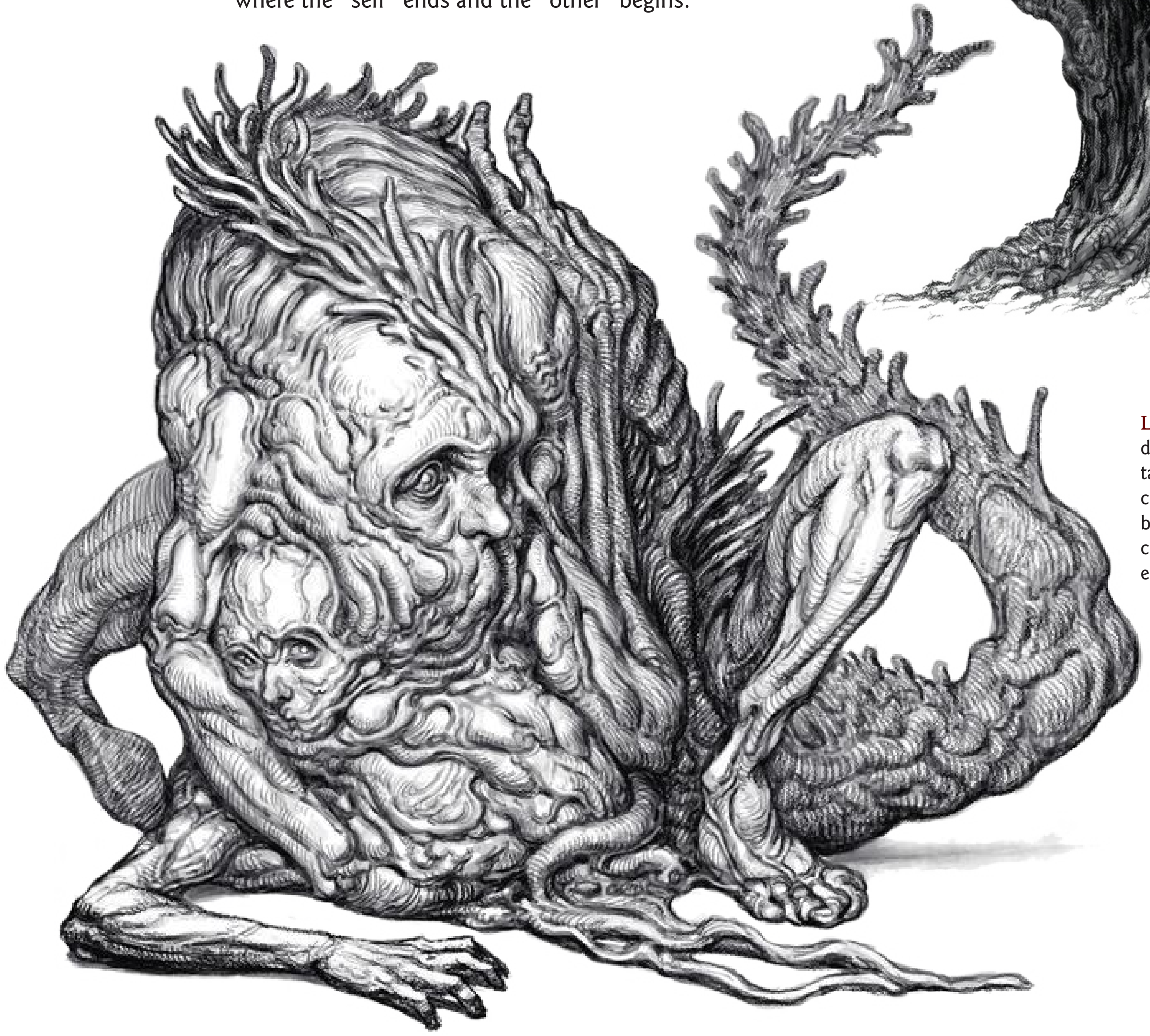
RIGHT "You form a violent codependent bond with the parasite, which is essential for your survival in this hostile world," says Acovic, "but as the game progresses and the creature grows stronger, it becomes a deadly burden."

Scorn's parasite is a character unto itself, and after an early encounter it acts as a companion of sorts throughout your journey. It's a merciless creation, starting off stringy and snake-like, but growing progressively larger and more powerful as you trek deeper into the darkness.

The protagonist and parasite enjoy a symbiotic relationship. Without it, the protagonist would be entirely defenseless, but Acovic's evolutionary parasitic designs paint a disturbing picture of what happens if that relationship is left unchecked and the leech were allowed to feed on somebody without limit. Hungry claws rip and tear at flesh as the parasite is overcome with bloodlust, eventually engulfing its victim and assimilating what's left into its body.

Most of *Scorn*'s artwork makes players question where organic matter ends and machinery begins. The protagonist and parasitic passenger designs, however, pose a different conundrum, asking players to constantly monitor the sliding scale of where the "self" ends and the "other" begins.





LEFT AND ABOVE "These drawings represent the parasite taking over your body," says concept artist Filip Acovic. "It's becoming the dominant one and controlling you; you can't really escape its grasp anymore."

THE ASSEMBLY

Scorn's opening location is a factory that makes players ask some very deep, very disturbing questions of themselves. Ostensibly, it's a recycling plant. A noble cause, you might think, until you discover what is being recycled.

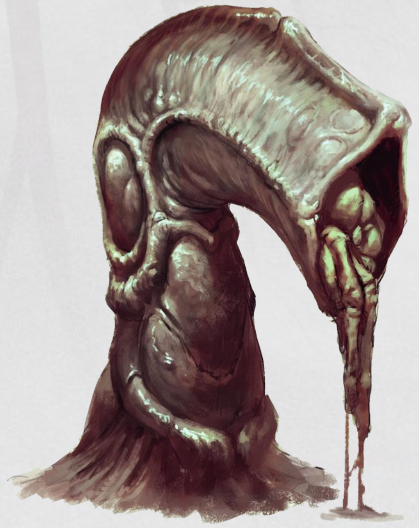
"The whole level is designed around the idea that we use everything in our environment as a resource, even living things," says game designer Ljubomir Peklar. "And once you set it up in that way, a factory for using or reusing living things, we needed to figure out how it functions. That's how these designs happened."

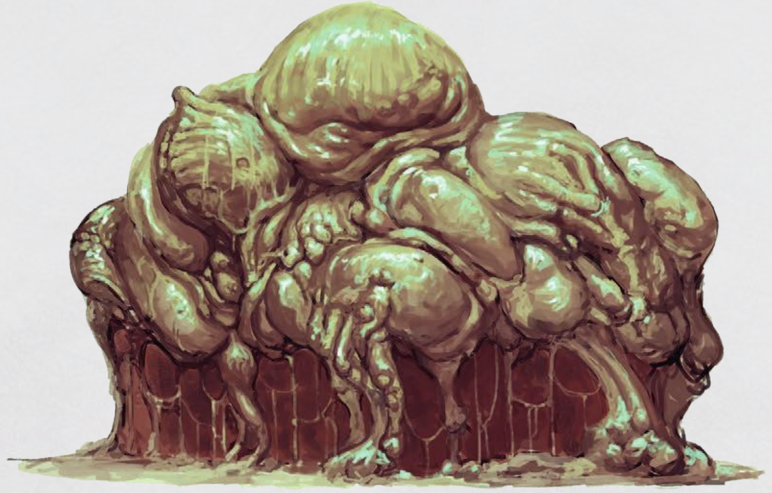
Welcome to how the sausage is made. The sausage meat in question belongs to a group of pitiful humanoid creatures—more on them on p130—and it was concept artist Filip Acovic's job to detail how the factory level, referred to internally as the Assembly, would be established to harvest their bodies on an industrial scale. Everything from these creatures' birth and their transport, to their slaughter and hints at how different body parts are stripped and put to use, had to be planned.

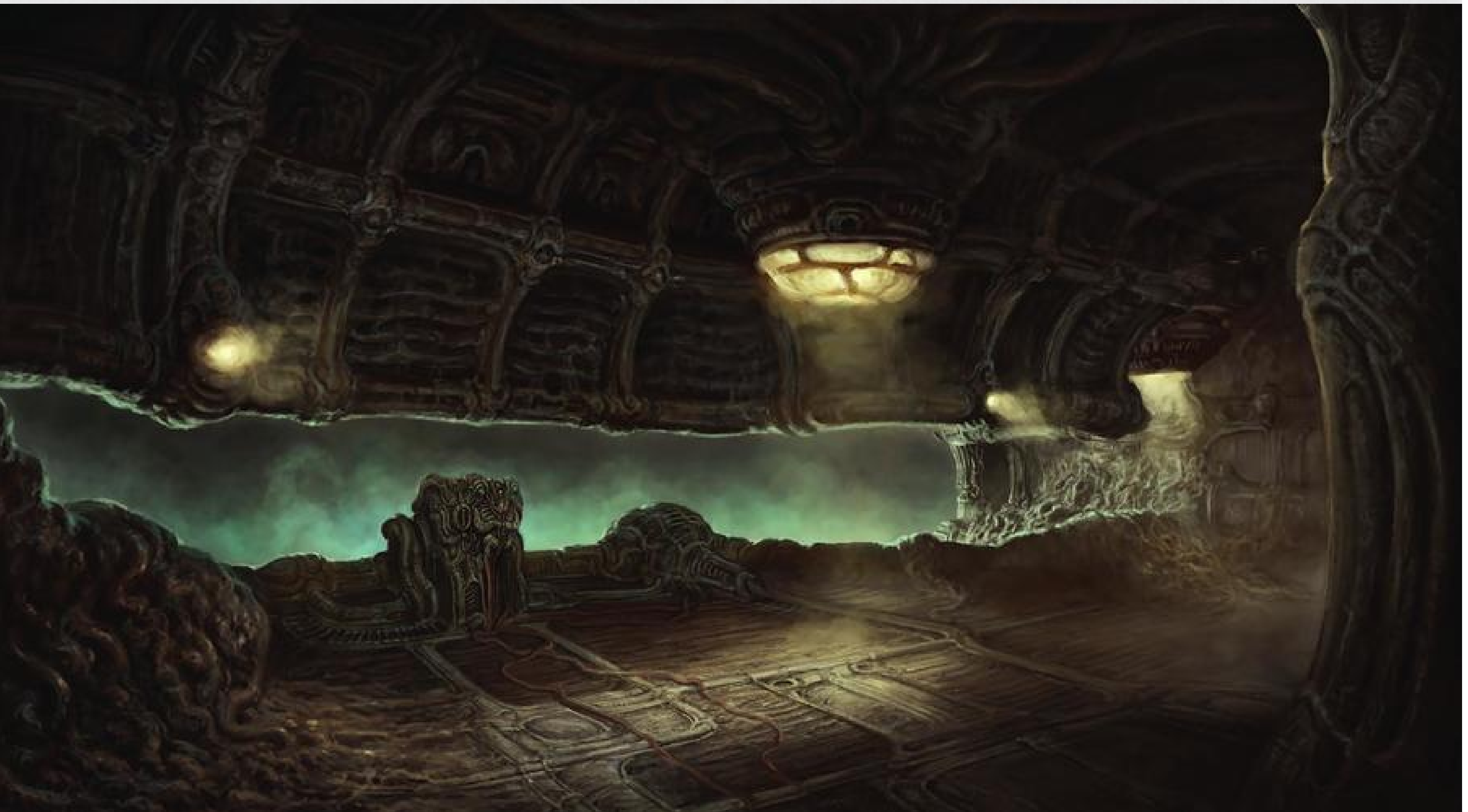
Acovic quickly established the designs of

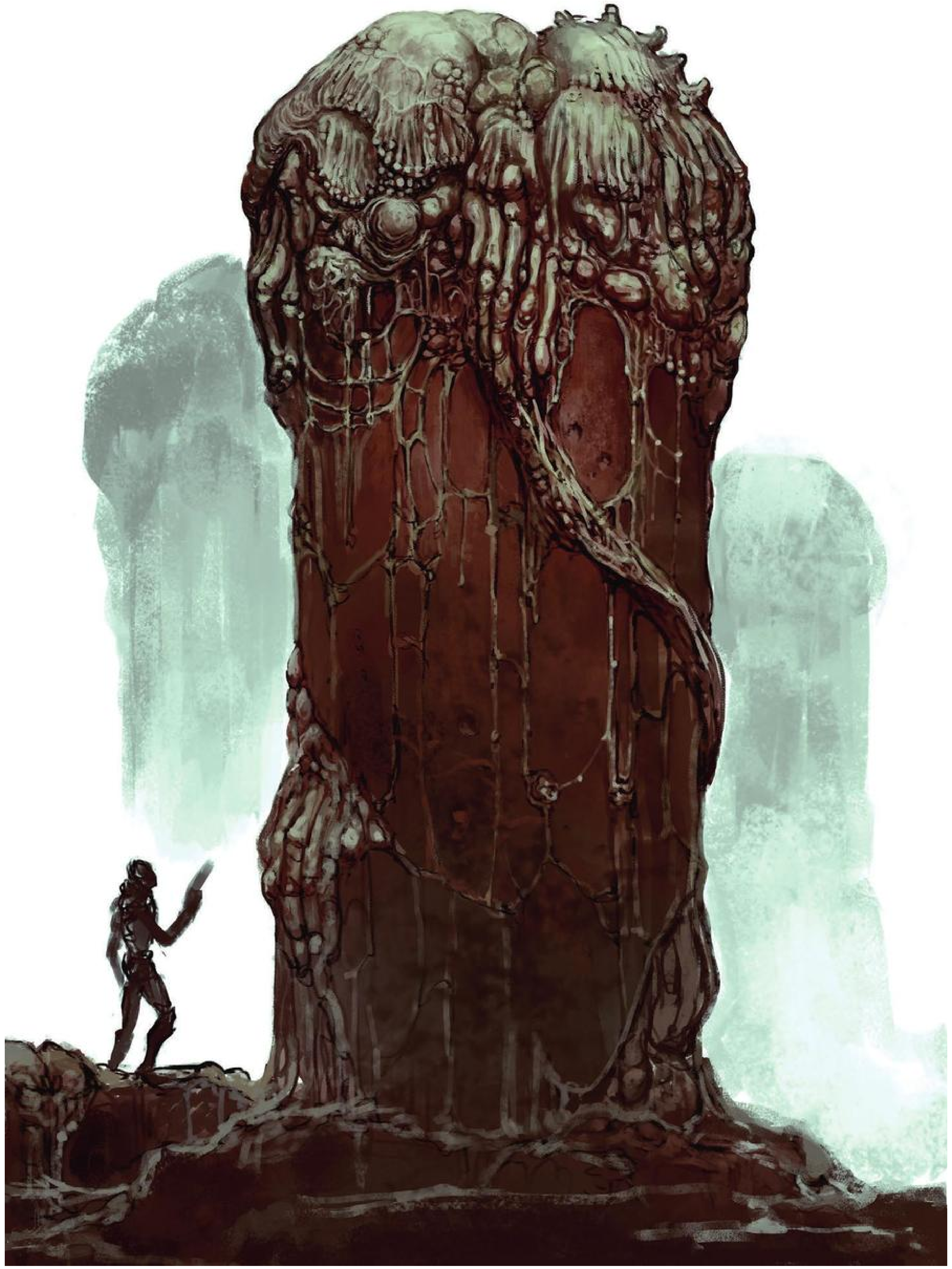
RIGHT To instill a sense of dread, giant columns in the parasite room dwarf curious players.

BELOW Clumps of mysterious, wet flesh are left to spoil throughout the Assembly.







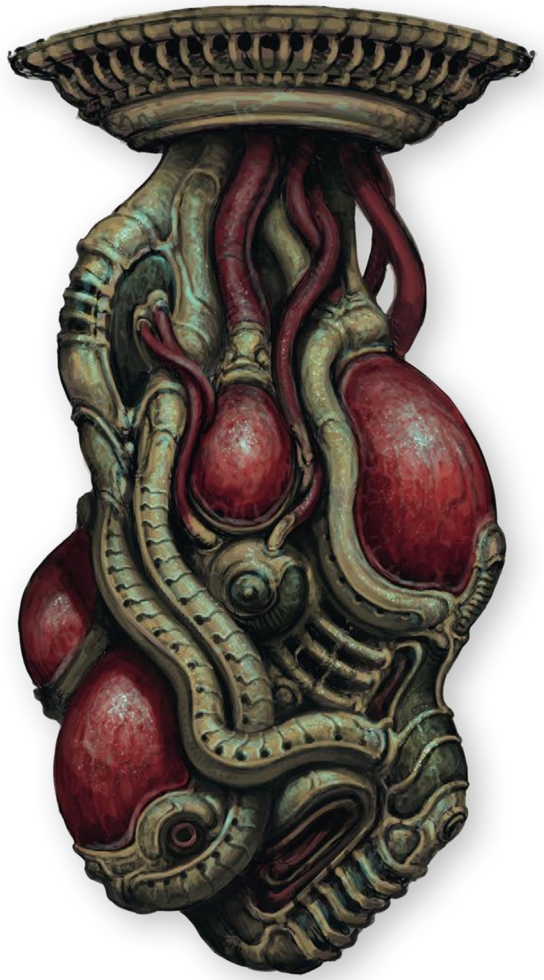


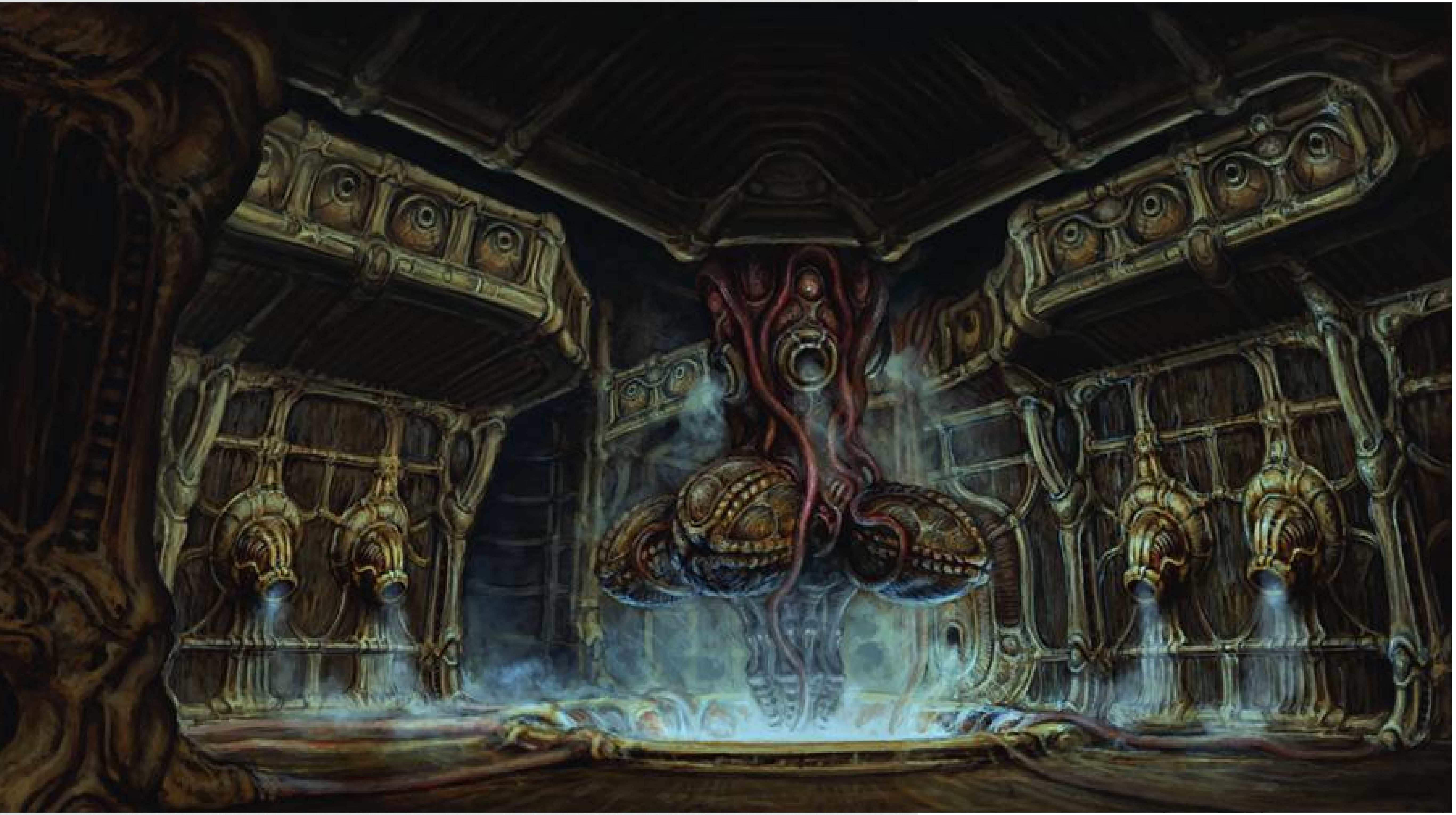
execution machines and circular saw grinders, purposefully creating machinery with precision-planned functions for the player to operate as they seek to find a way out of the factory. Transport carts rattling along spine-like single-rail tracks and simple articulated body hooks give the Assembly's production line an arid retro-industrial feel, contrasting with the positively greenhouse-esque growing labs.

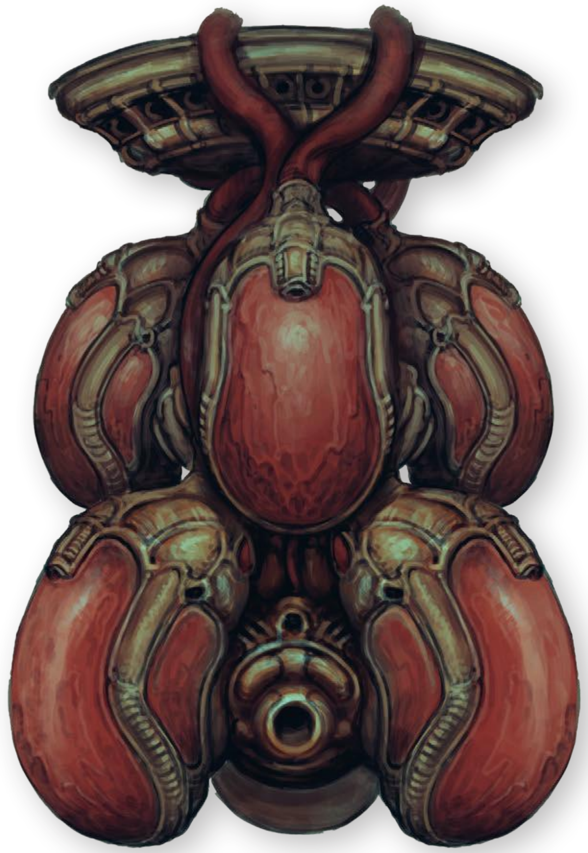
Here artwork depicts glowing red pods containing humanoid figures nestled inside biomechanical tulips, petals splayed open to reveal the inner shielding structures. Podhouse ceilings are smeared with thick

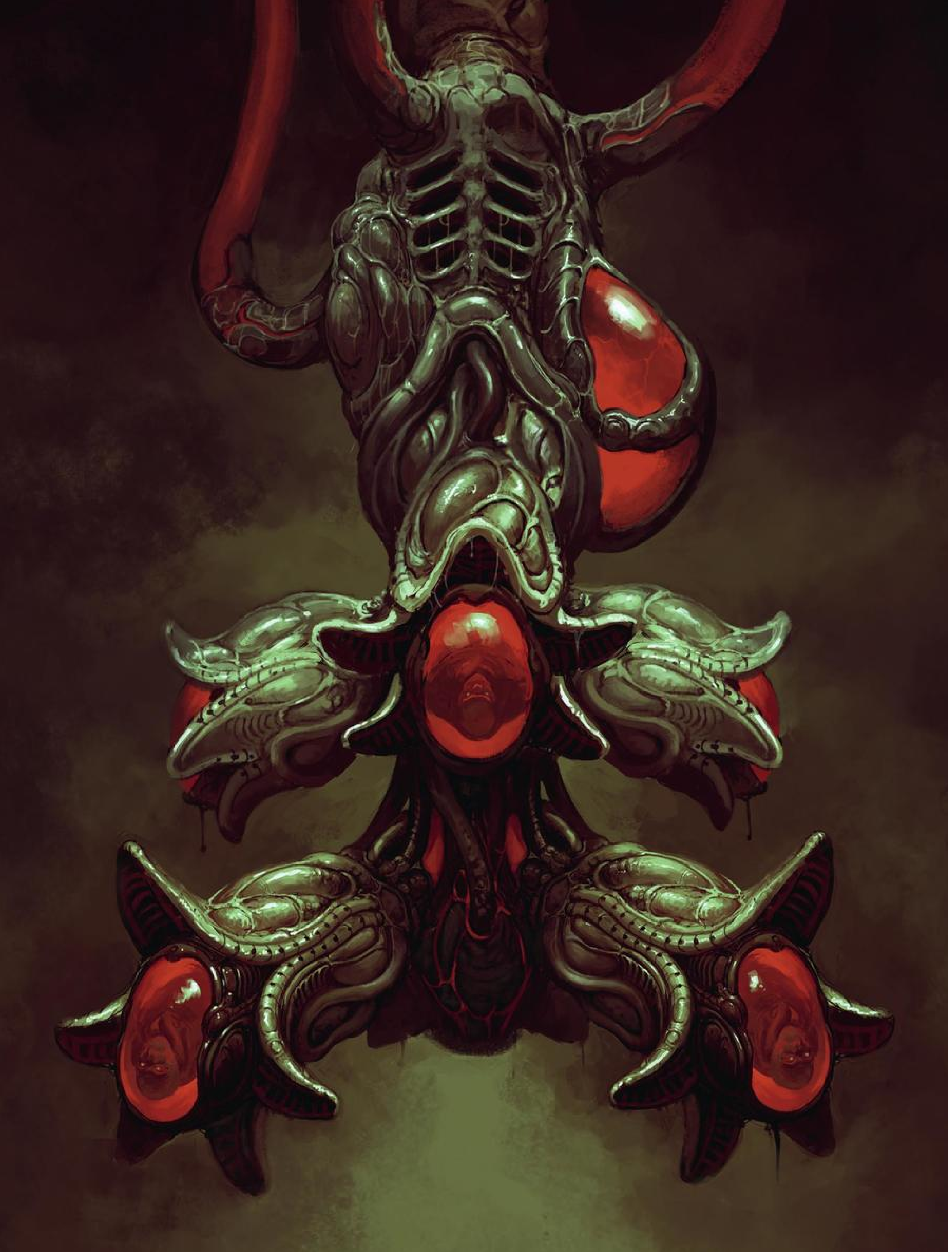
RIGHT These red pods are humanoid incubators. Subtle design revisions through the concept phase saw these units initially depicted as uneven clusters of uteruses, then as more uniform, ordered stalks of fruit-like capsules.

BELOW The pod room plays a pivotal role. Players must gather fuse coils from across the Assembly's layout in order to interact with the central pod stack, unlocking a key for progression as the reward.

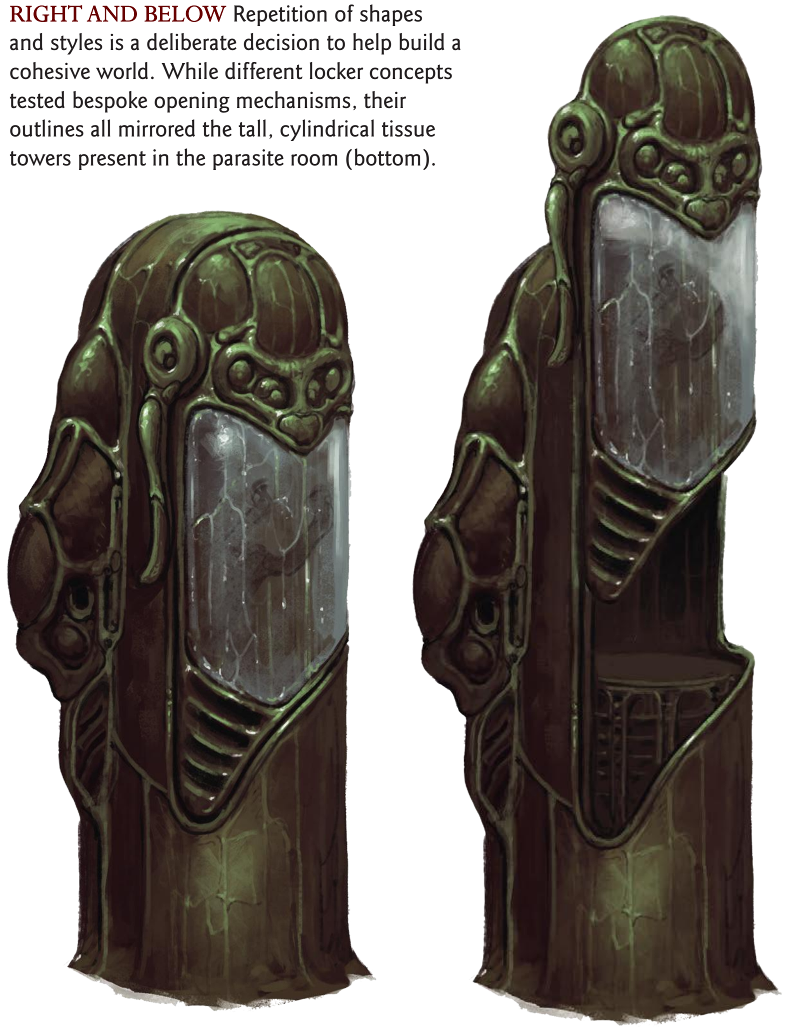


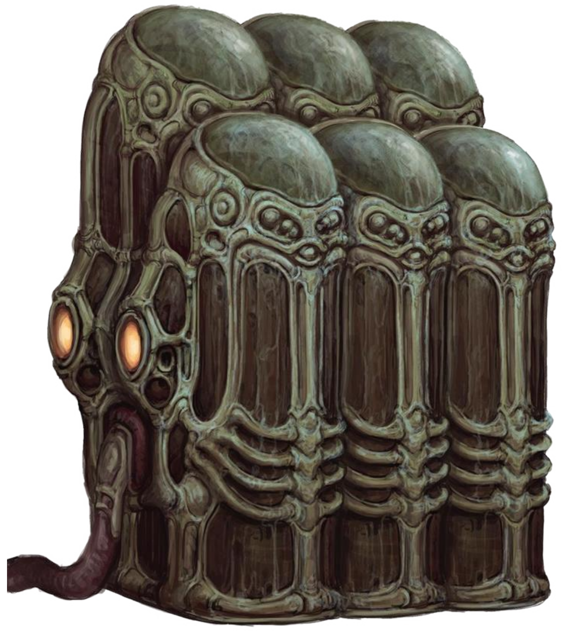




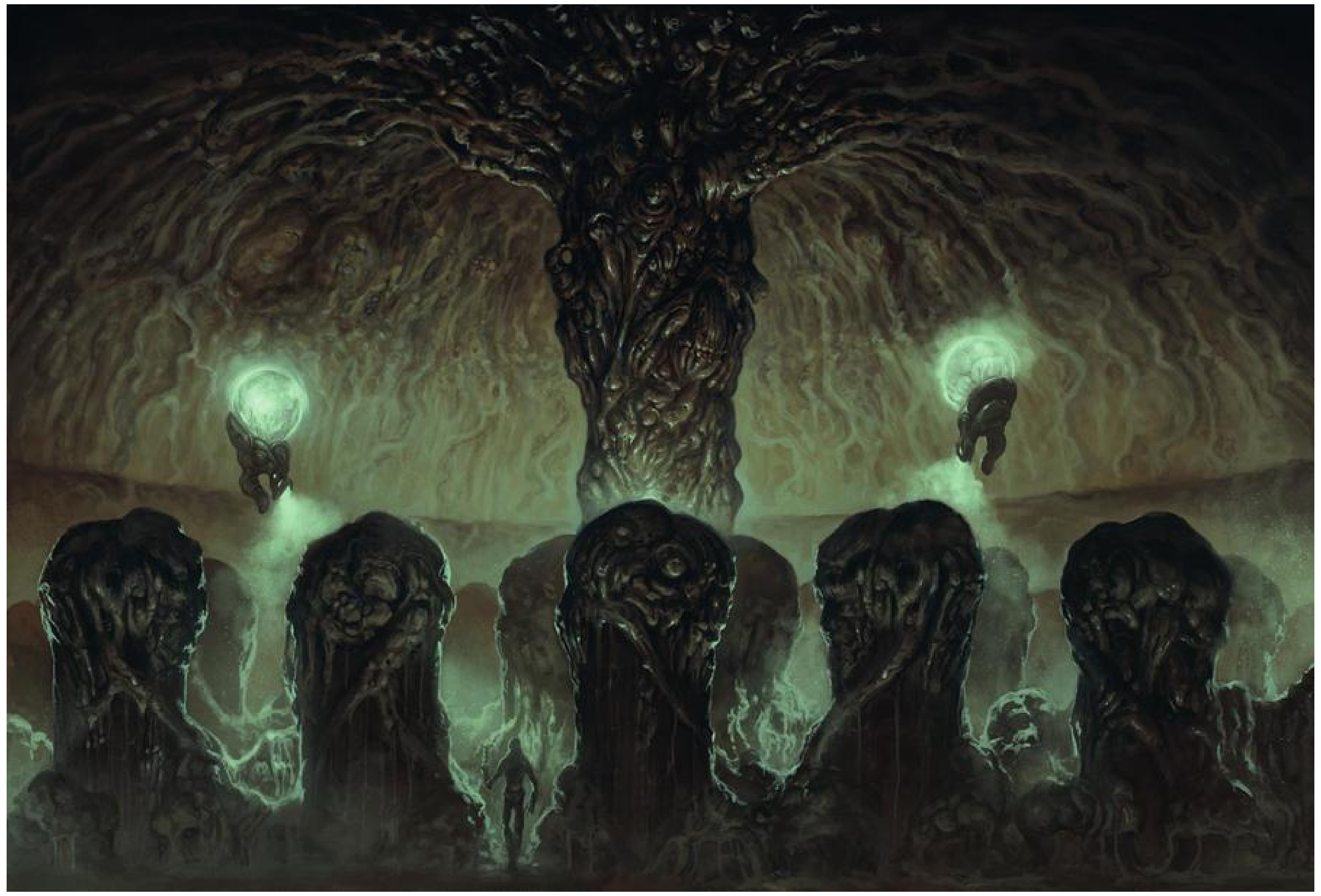


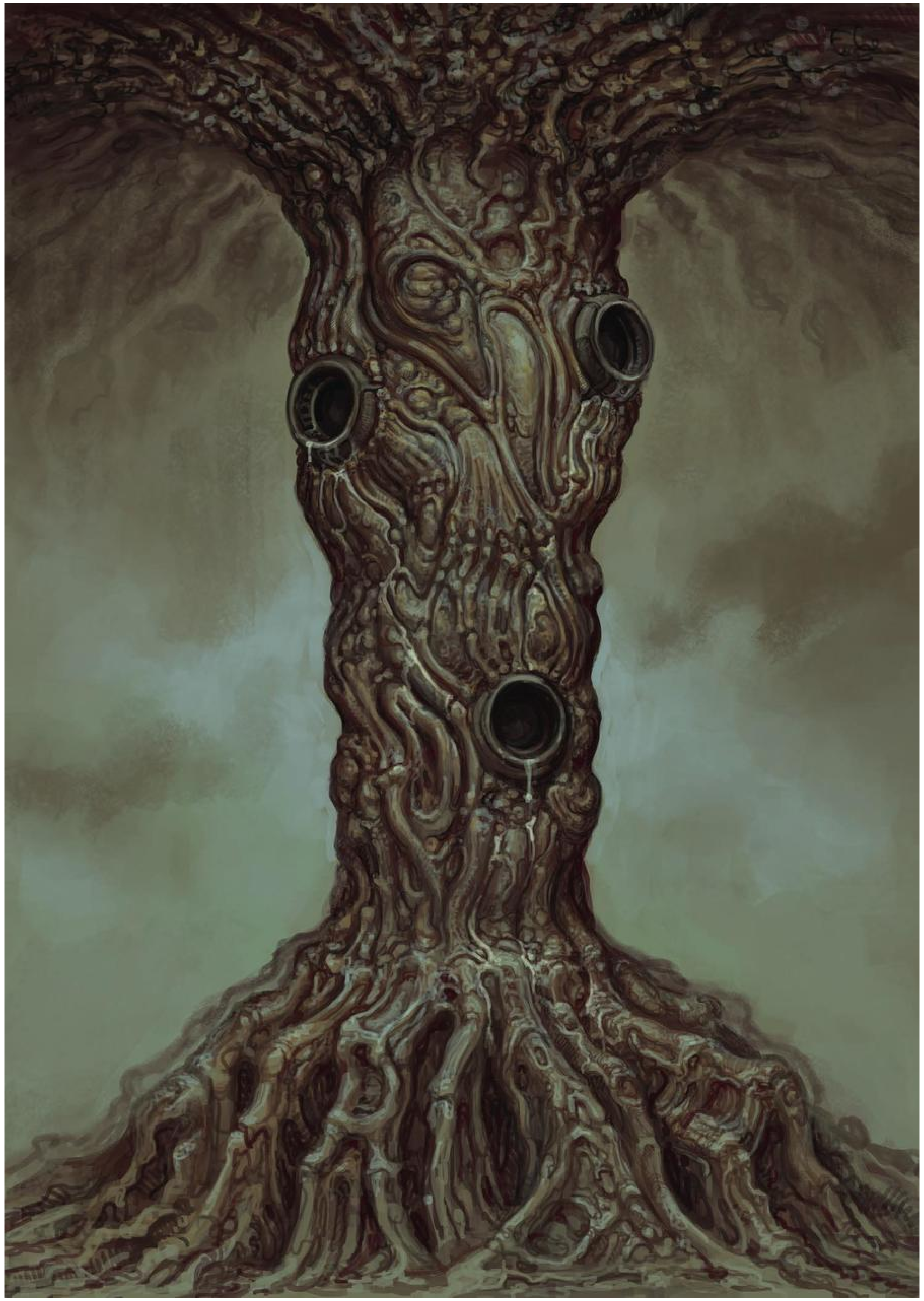
RIGHT AND BELOW Repetition of shapes and styles is a deliberate decision to help build a cohesive world. While different locker concepts tested bespoke opening mechanisms, their outlines all mirrored the tall, cylindrical tissue towers present in the parasite room (bottom).

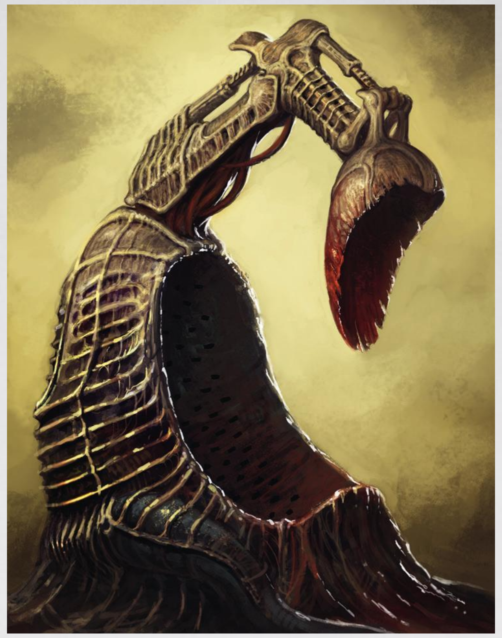


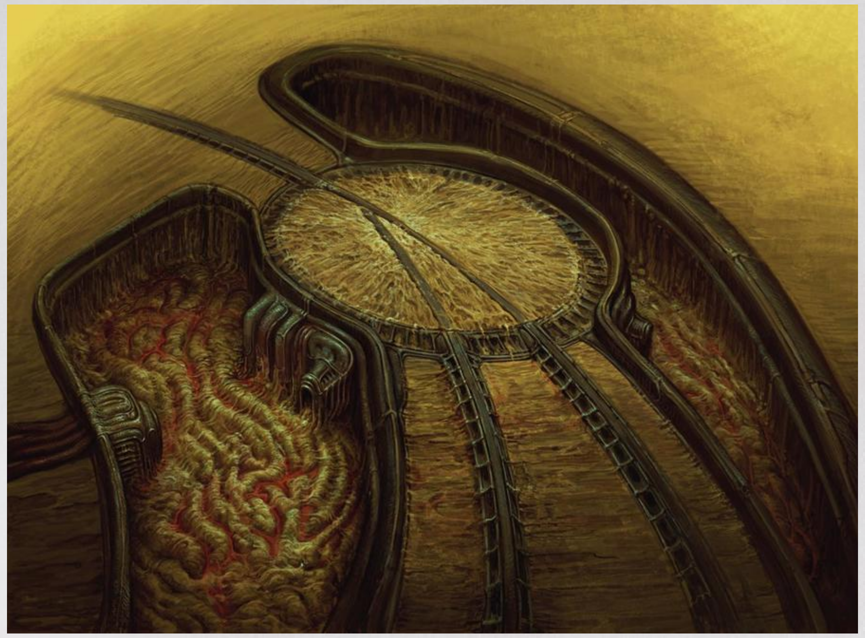


amniotic fluid, rivulets coursing down the walls. Flying drones busily tend to parasite rooms, misting the atmosphere to hydrate the monolithic tissue towers found beneath the branches of a sinister giblet tree.





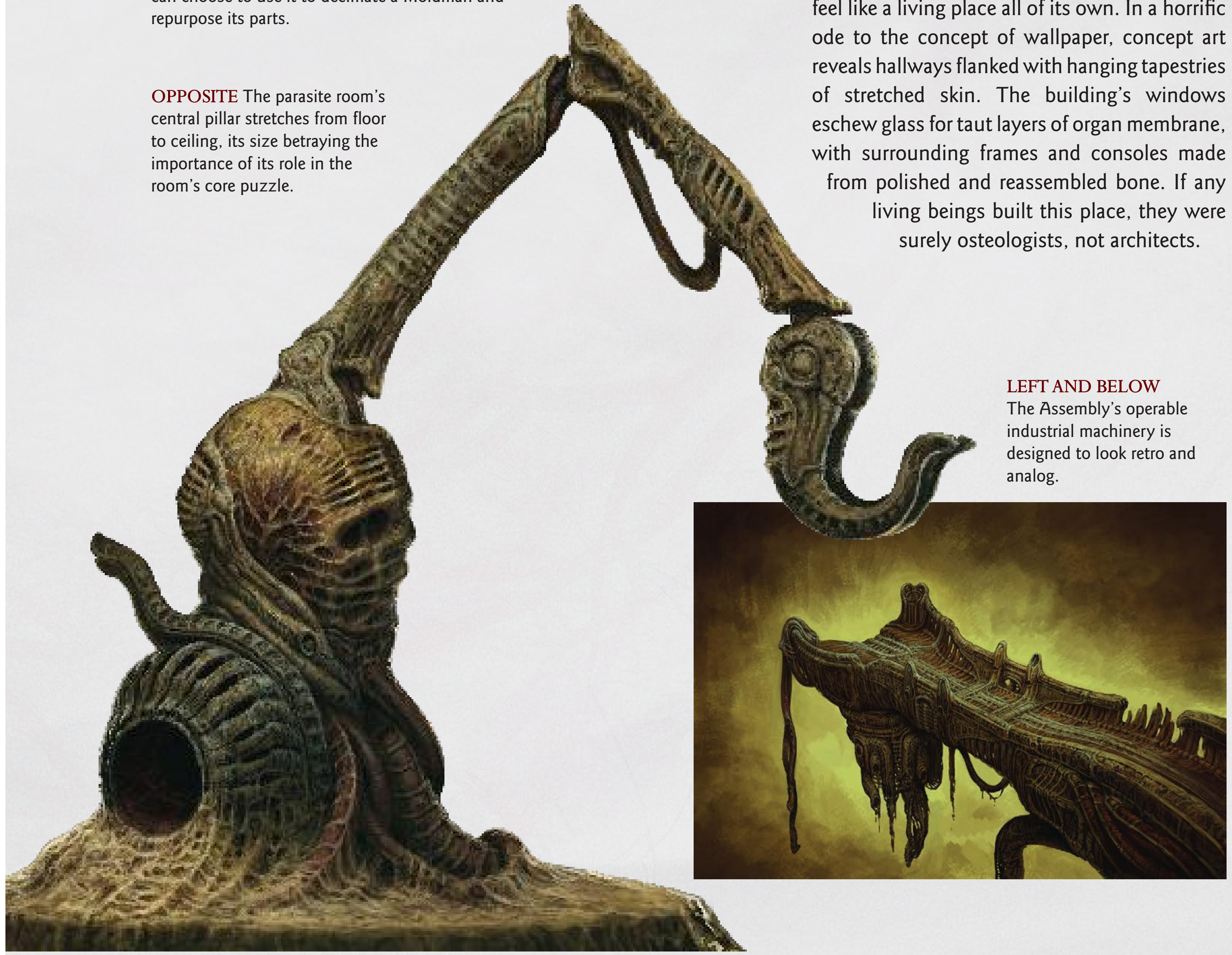




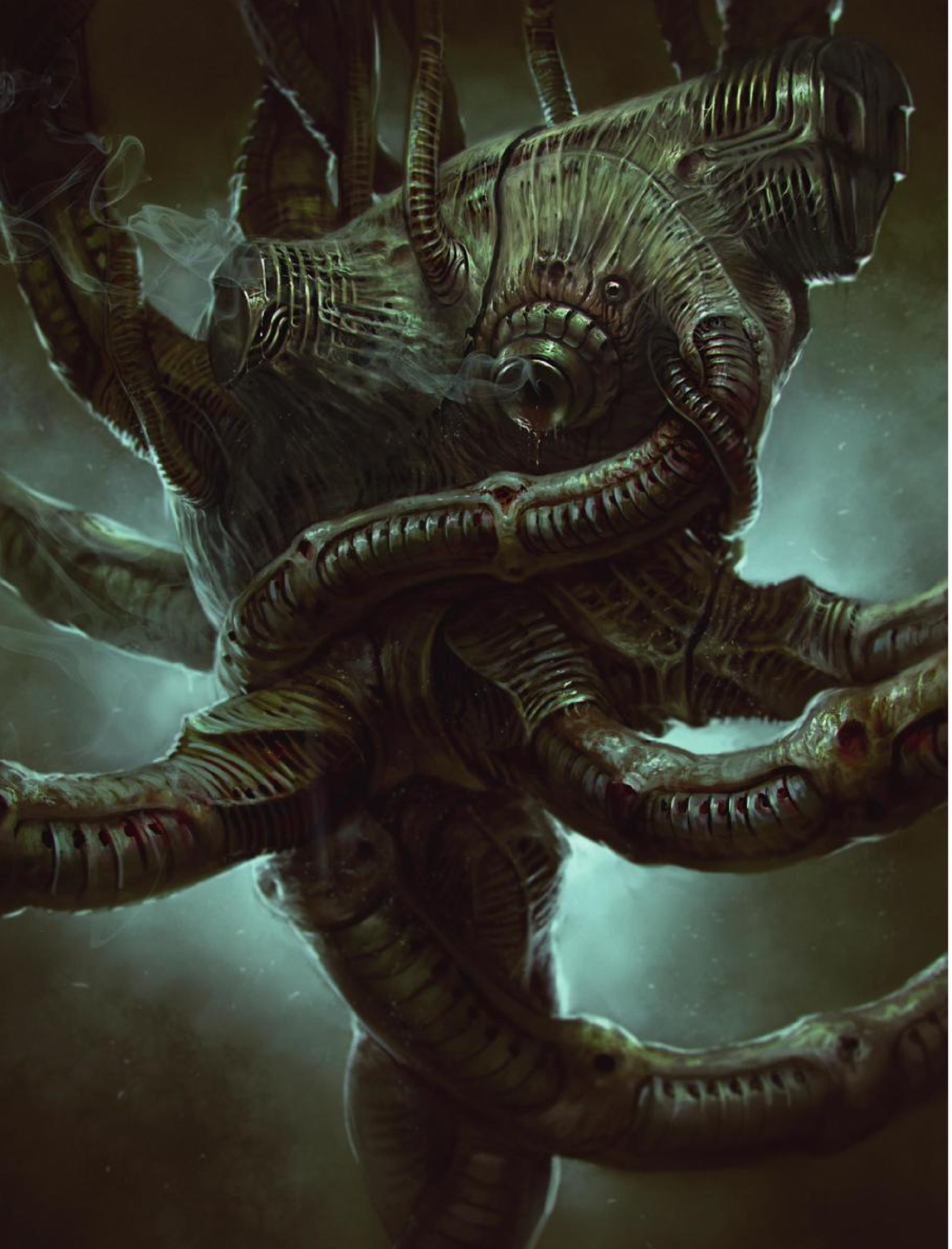
ABOVE This giant bed and ice cream scoop combination is an execution machine. Players can choose to use it to decimate a Moldman and repurpose its parts.

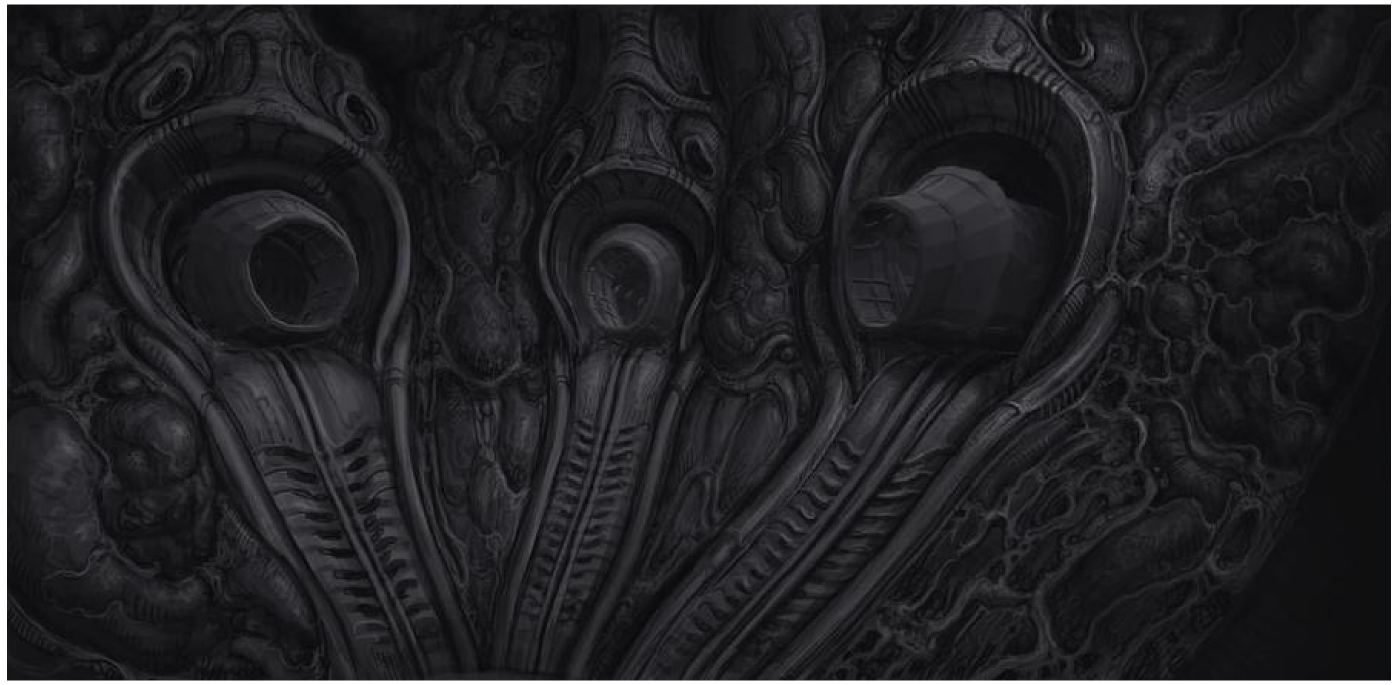
OPPOSITE The parasite room's central pillar stretches from floor to ceiling, its size betraying the importance of its role in the room's core puzzle.

Fittingly, the factory itself appears constructed from recycled bodies, making it feel like a living place all of its own. In a horrific ode to the concept of wallpaper, concept art reveals hallways flanked with hanging tapestries of stretched skin. The building's windows eschew glass for taut layers of organ membrane, with surrounding frames and consoles made from polished and reassembled bone. If any living beings built this place, they were surely osteologists, not architects.



LEFT AND BELOW
The Assembly's operable industrial machinery is designed to look retro and analog.

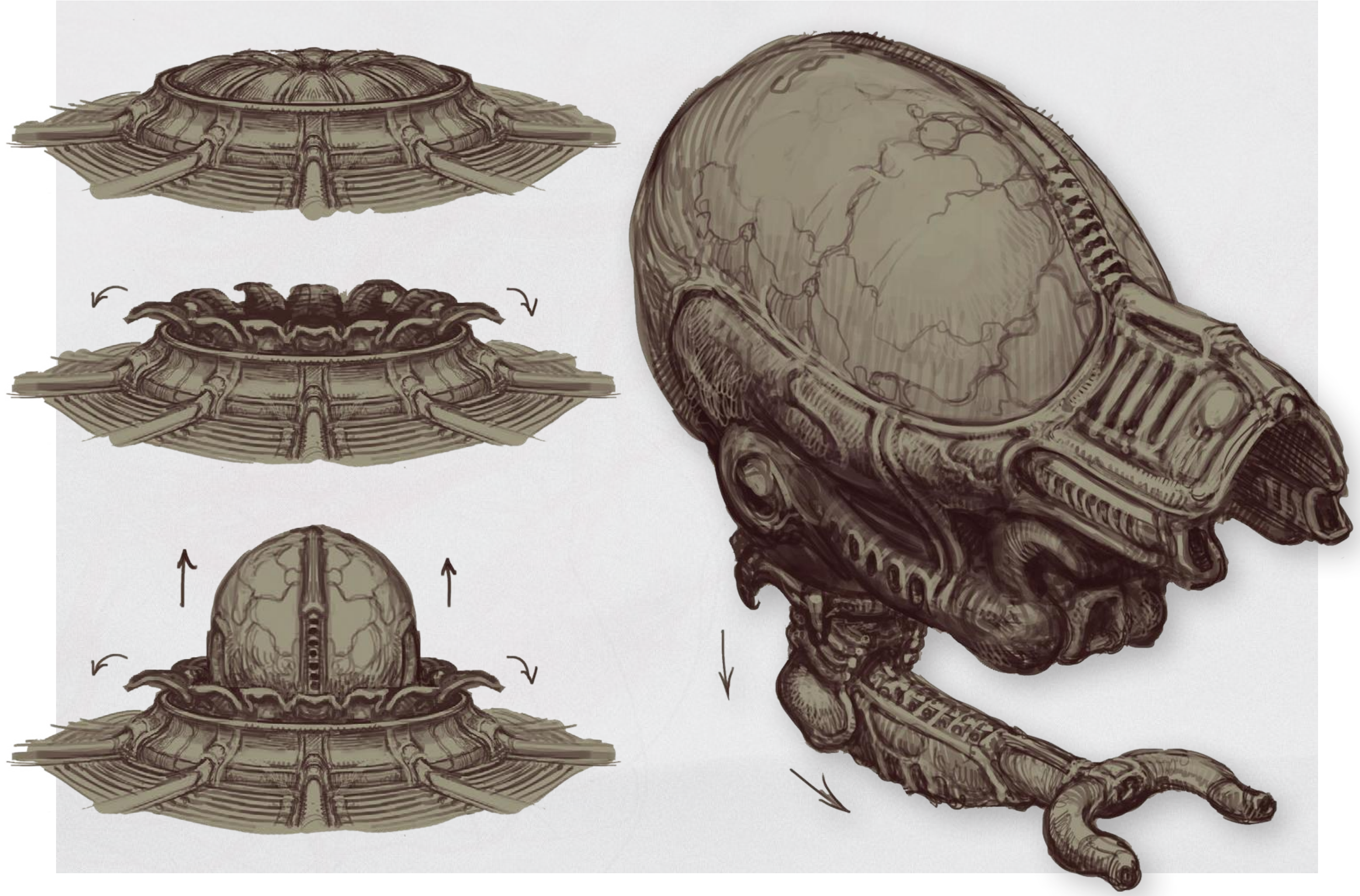


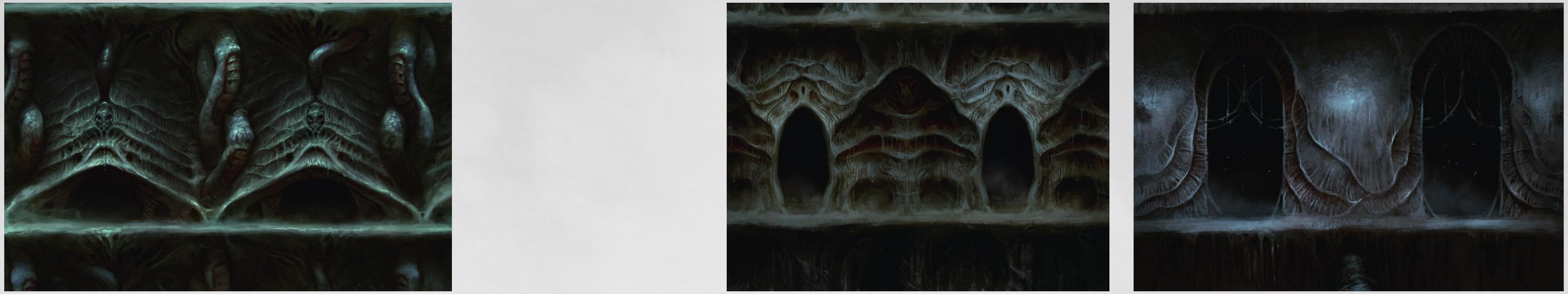


At the center of it all sits the factory's literal heart. Outwardly it appears to be more a refinery than an organ: diseased atria and ventricles wrapped in a chaotic tangle of mechanical arteries designed, in part, to pump fear and distilled cruelty around the factory's many capillary hallways. When players venture inside, its true nature is revealed: the heart doubles as a junction of walkways, granting access to the factory's different levels from one central point.

ABOVE Players navigate the inner chamber of the heart junction by extending and retracting enclosed walkways.

BELOW Flying fertilizer drones emerge from valves to tend to the parasite room.

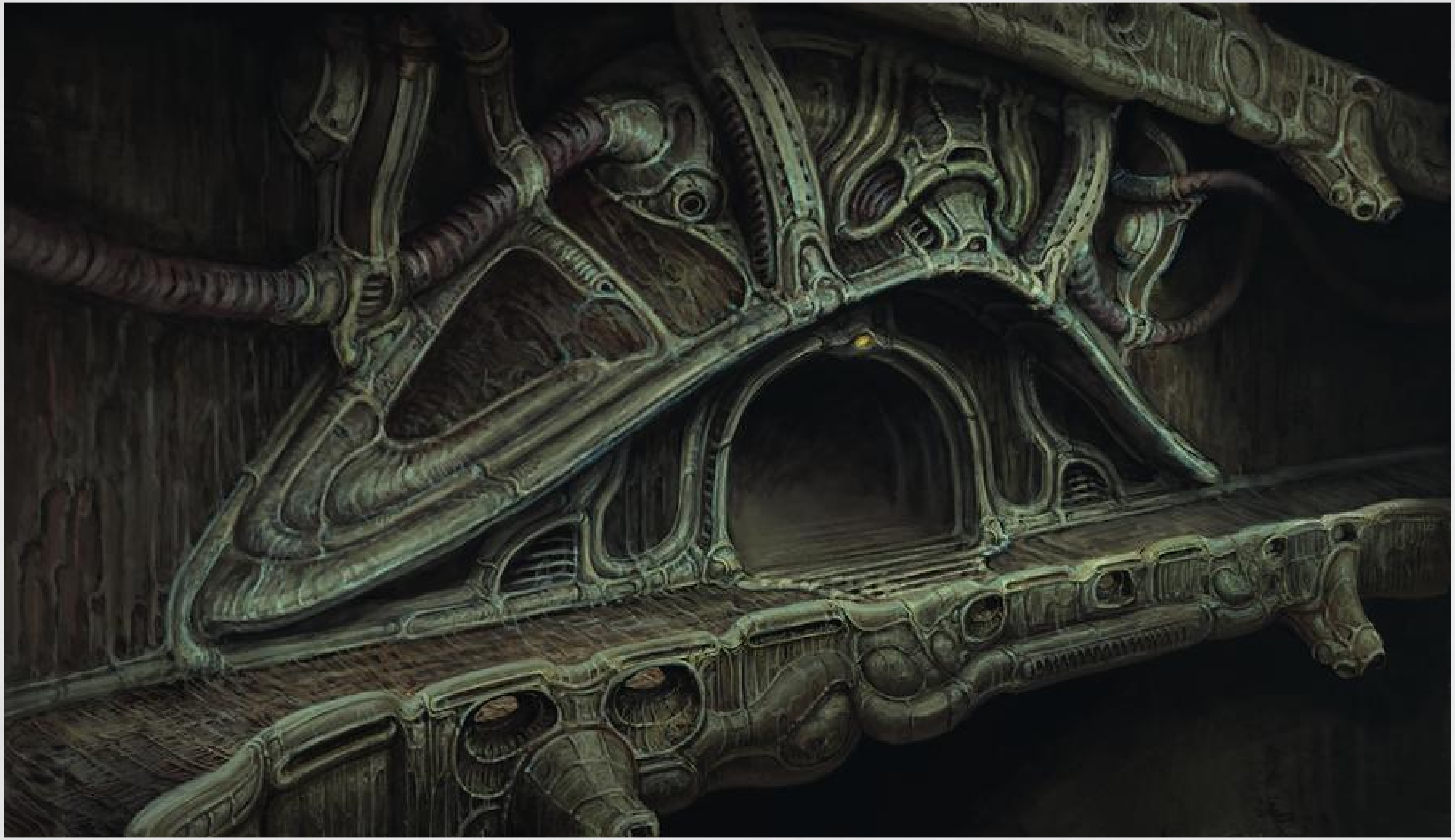




RIGHT A variety of entranceway options showcasing different treatments to skin-coated walls. Styles tested include continuous stretches of dried flesh, pulled taut over the structure's underlying skeleton as if a vacuum-formed case, and multi-layered plates of unevenly hacked skin, overlapping like horrific wallpaper.

Many of the concepts across these pages remained on the page. Yet in a twist befitting the Assembly's purpose, select ideas were harvested and recycled elsewhere in *Scorn*, sometimes by accident.

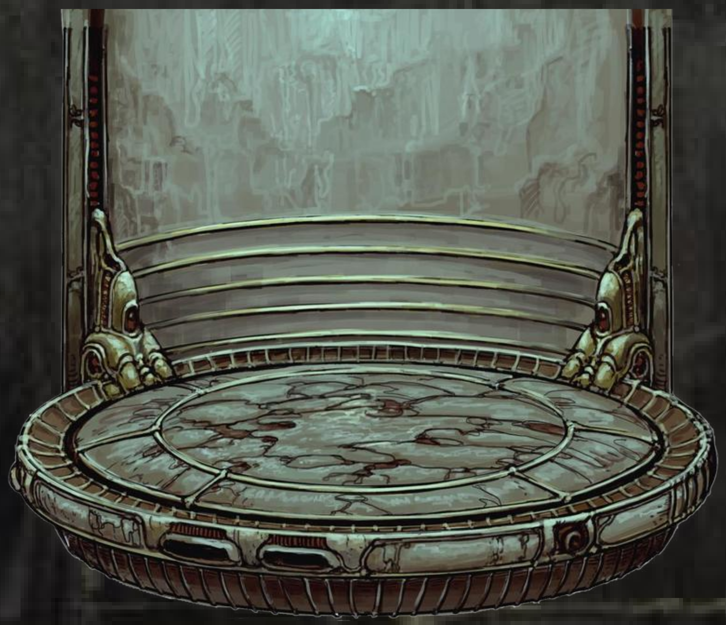
"We reused one of these door concepts at the end of the game. I had completely forgotten about it," marvels Ljubomir Peklar, revisiting this concept artwork. "It's a somewhat redesigned feature but the idea is very similar. Sometimes we reuse our own rejected designs in different levels, where they make more sense than in the location originally conceived."

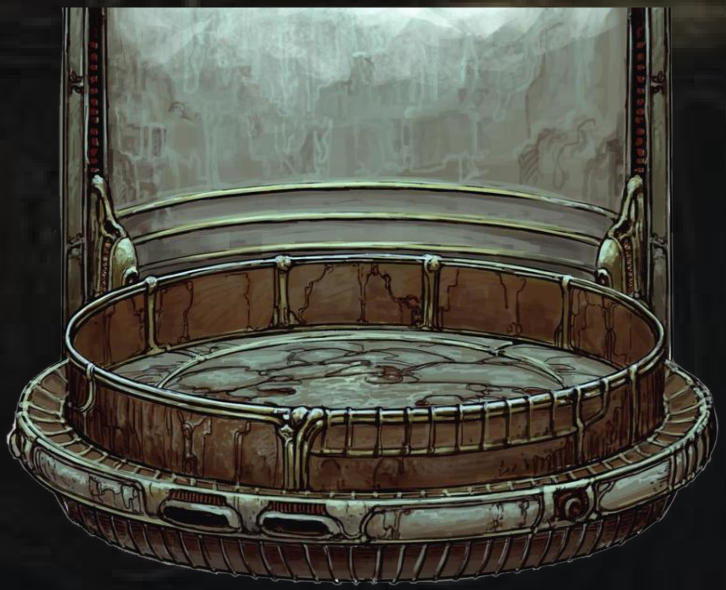


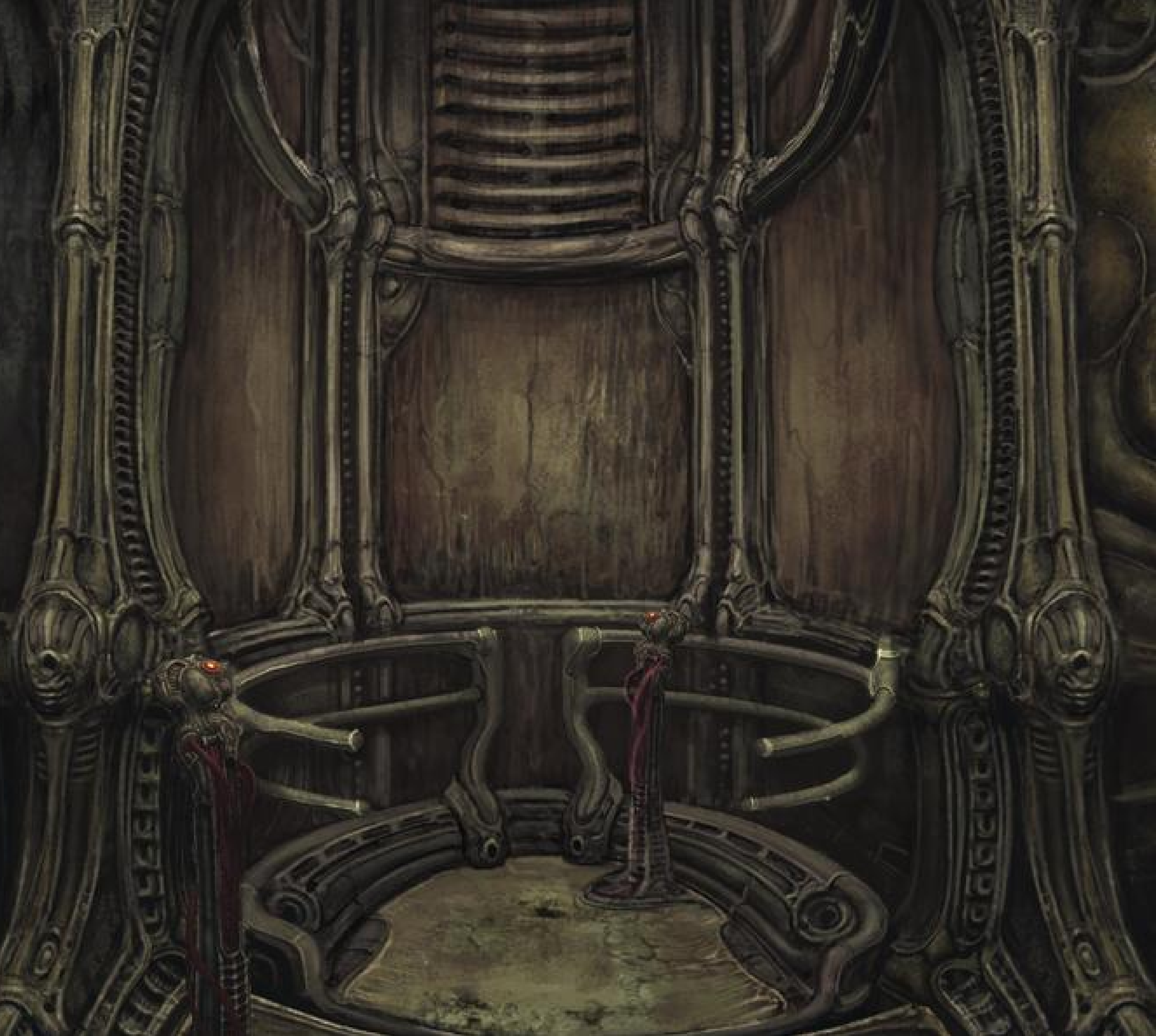
RIGHT Nature finds straight lines and right angles abhorrent, so it's not surprising that you'll struggle to find many within the concept artwork. "In the beginning there were some straight lines," says game director Ljubomir Peklar, "but I always asked for curves."

RIGHT Ribcaged lift platforms rattle upwards and downwards along spinal columns. The bony frame provides a sturdy and thematically sound answer to the problem of translating a very synthetic man-made invention into a biomechanical setting.

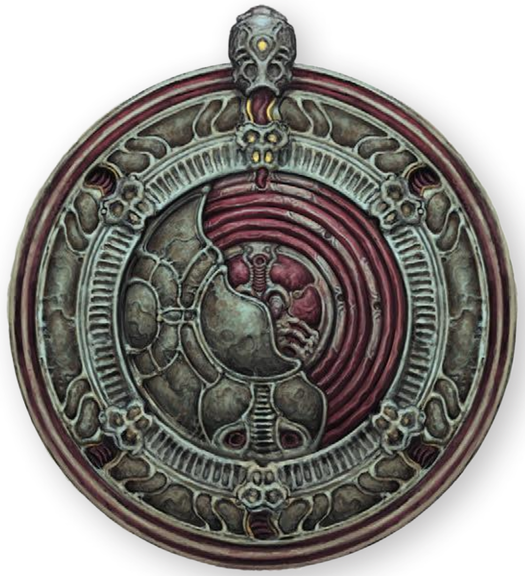
BELOW Early iterations of the lift took a more artificial approach to both the platform and mechanism design. Concealed tracks and smooth surfaces didn't hint at any organic apparatus at play.



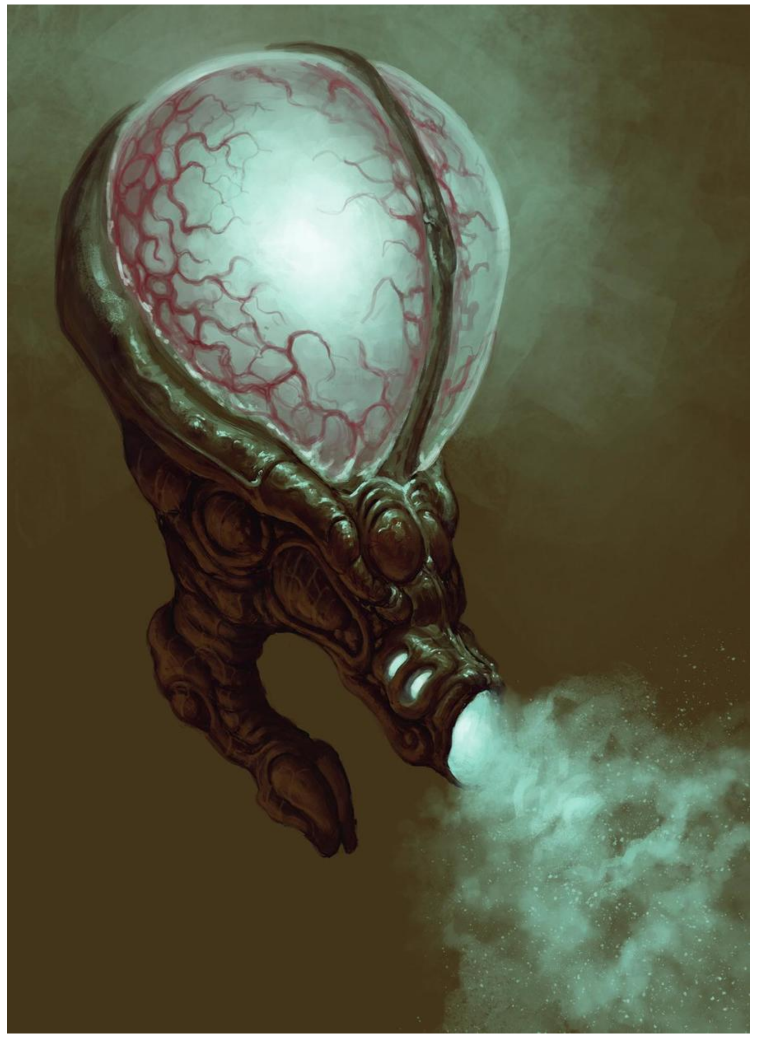


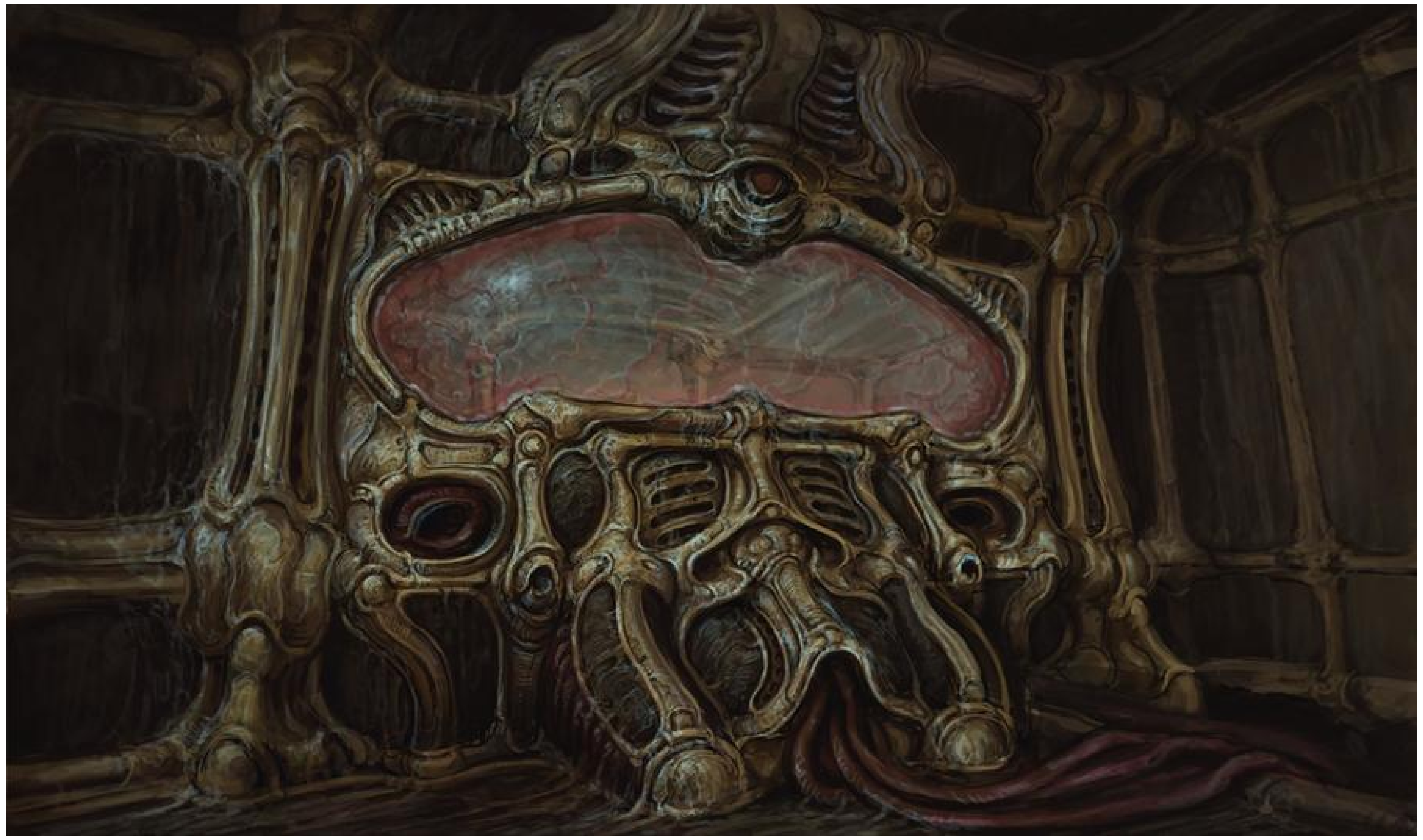


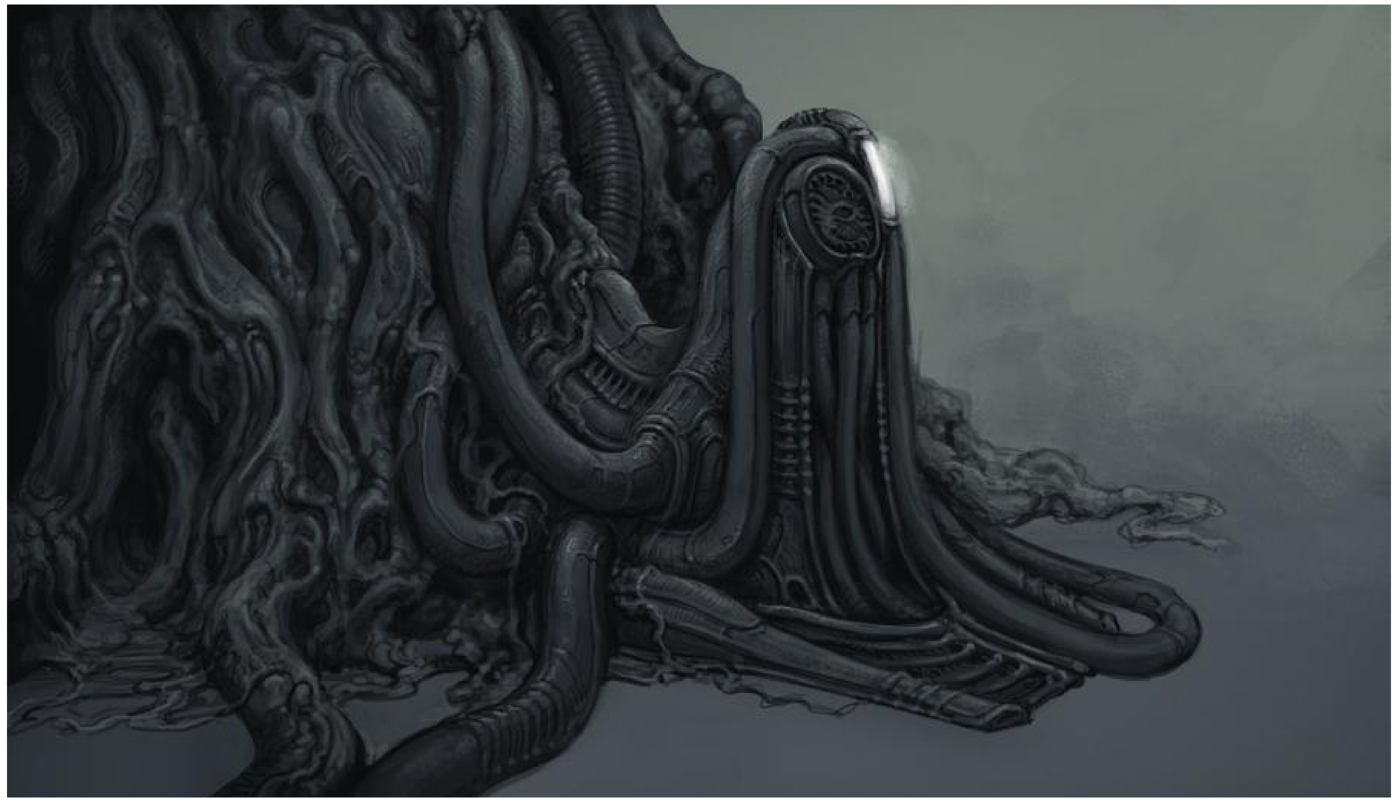
RIGHT Reactivated drones double up as the first real threats to player safety. Their glowing bulbous shells are clear weak points to target.



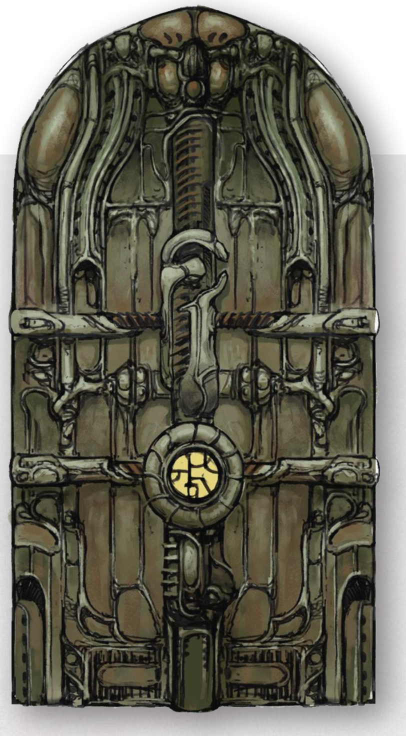
BELOW A viewing portal framed by disassembled and reconstructed skeletal pieces. Feature walls inside the Assembly show that the founding civilization valued art even in utilitarian locations.

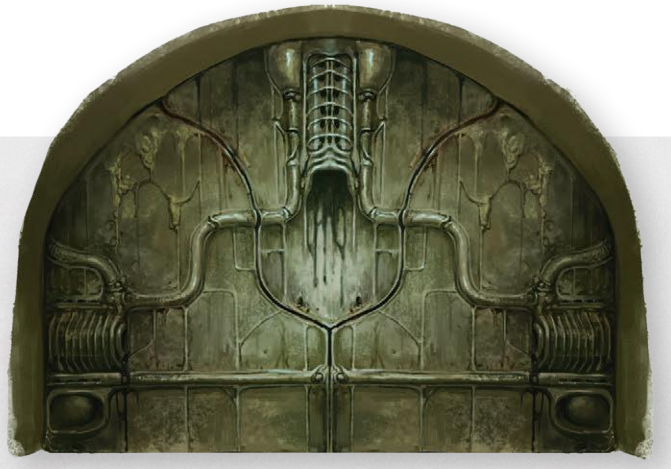


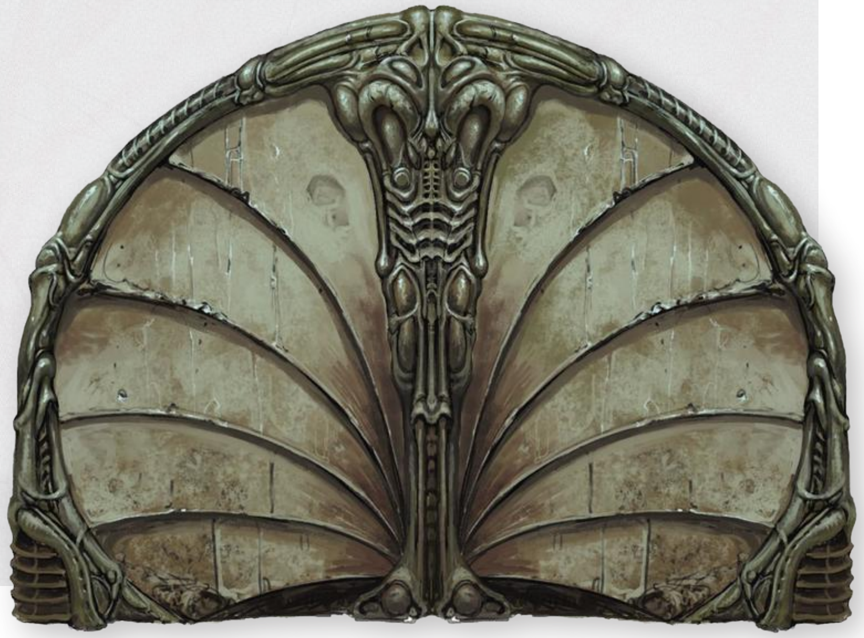




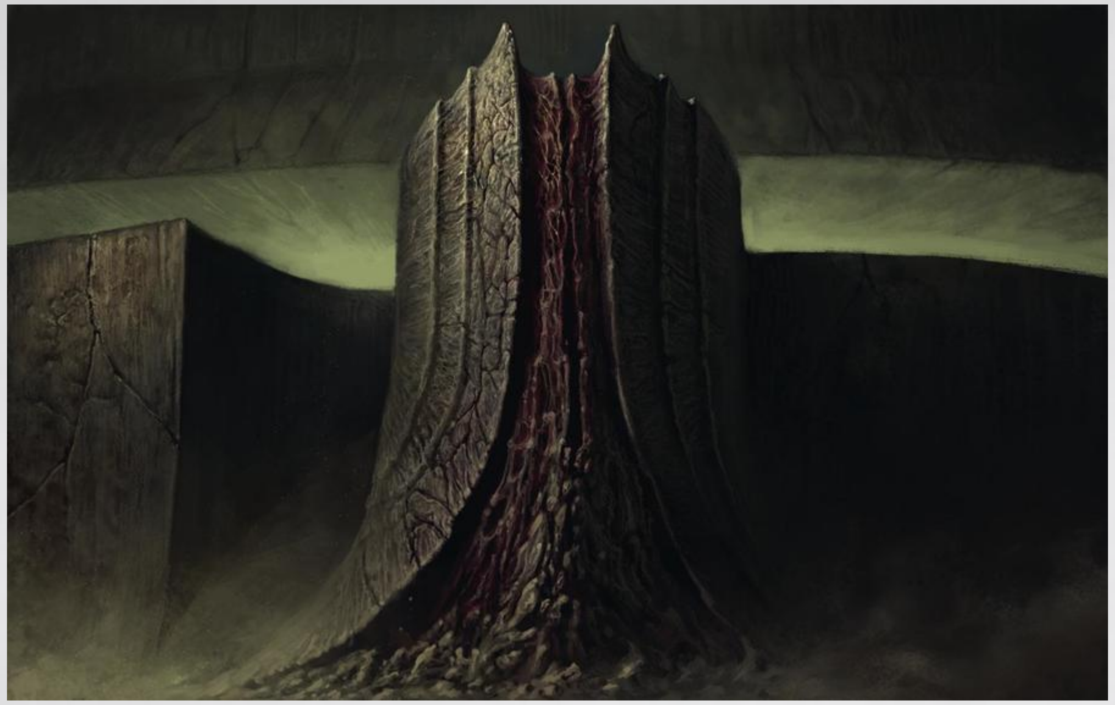
ABOVE To help cut through the gloom, Filip Acovic places small bioluminescent beacons by interactive elements as player guidance tools.





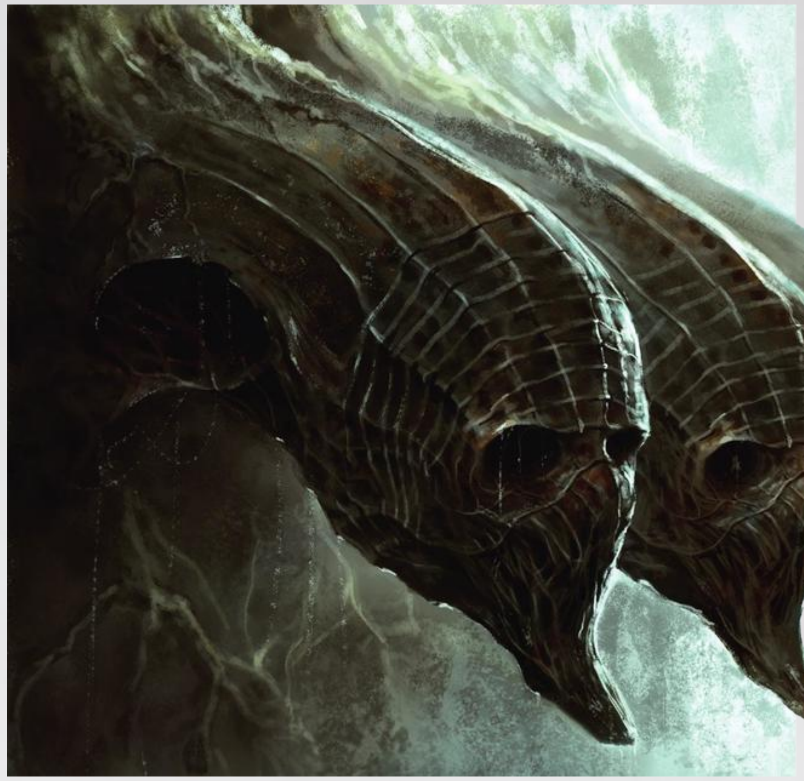


RIGHT "Some designs were extremely difficult to nail down, and paradoxically those were often some pretty mundane elements, such as doors," says concept artist Filip Acovic. "A simple door in this world can present a tremendous challenge: How do you make a mechanical contraption that doesn't look like a typical spaceship door, but has to look like a part of this world? That requires a lot of experimentation. The difficulty is that you can't reference something else. You can't Google 'spaceship door' or 'factory hangar door' and come up with a solution."



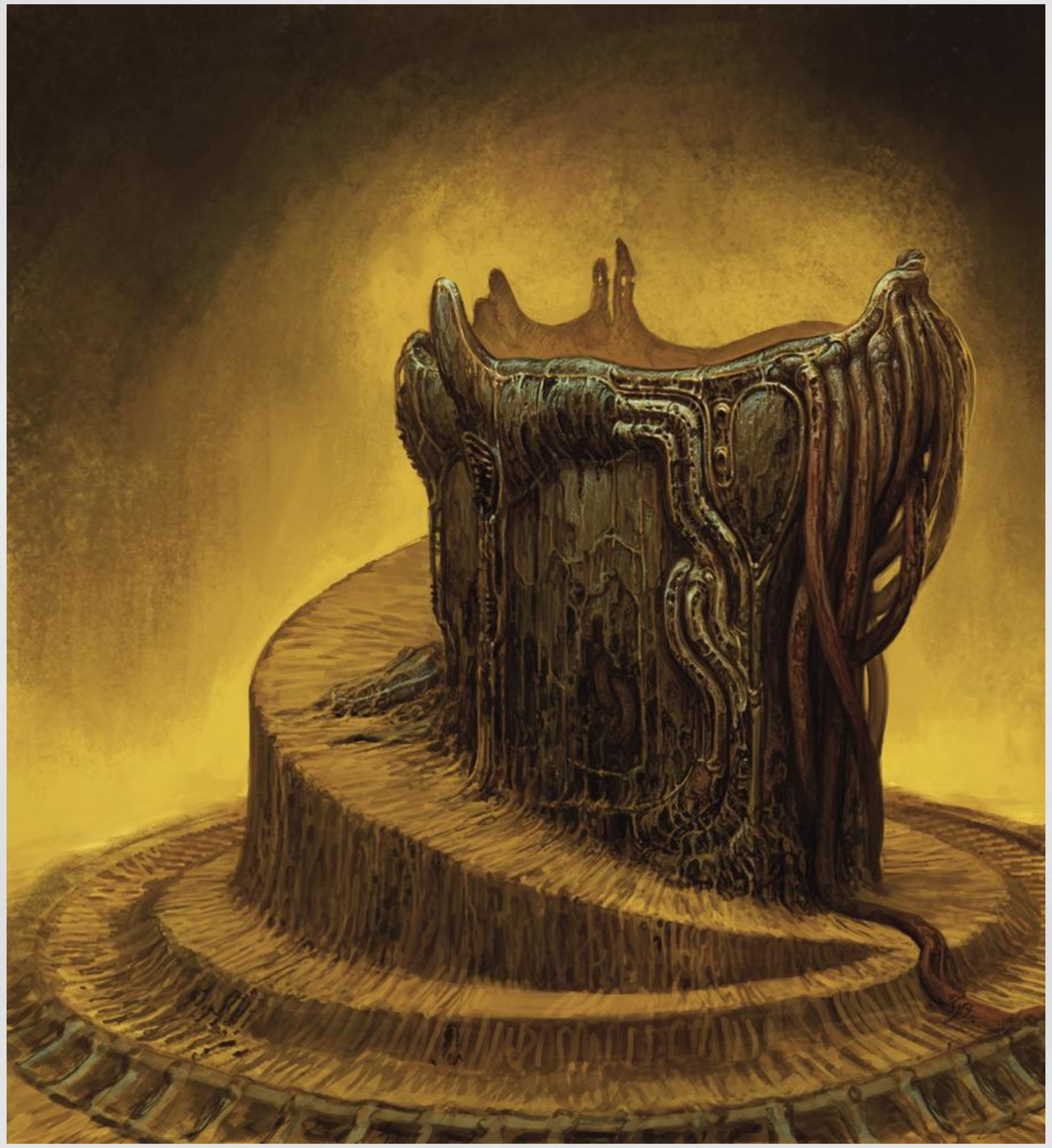
LEFT This mysterious monolithic shape of unknown purpose appeared in Scorn's first ever pre-alpha trailer in 2014, eight years before release.

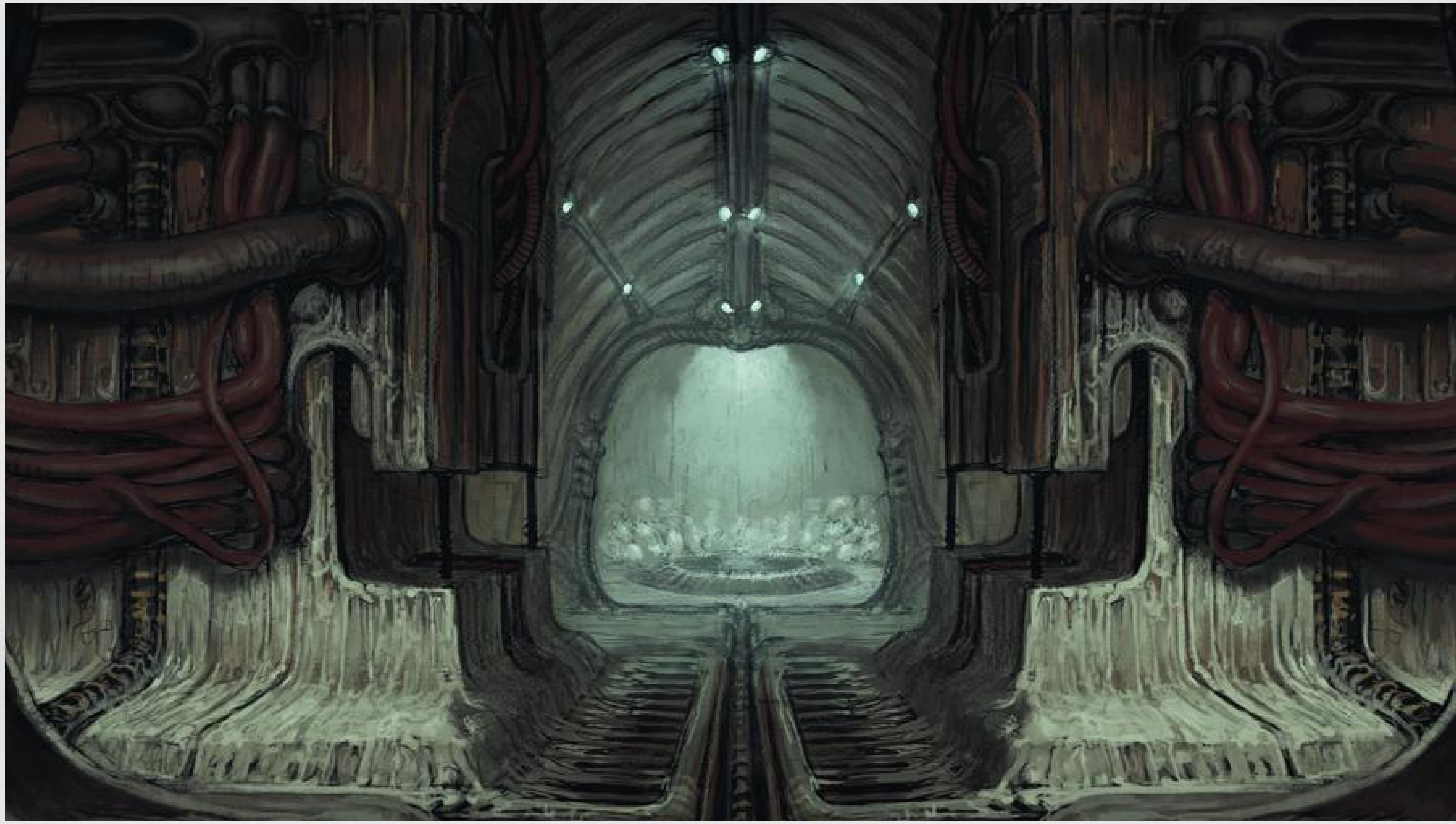
BELOW LEFT The elevated control platform in the middle of the Assembly's main chamber offers an unobstructed 360-degree view of the factory floor.



LEFT To help set them apart from our own looks, Scorn's humanoid faces all share unrecognizable perioral features.

BELOW Pressing machines flank the Assembly's side-corridors, suggesting heaving production lines of workers at some point in the distant past.





THE WALL

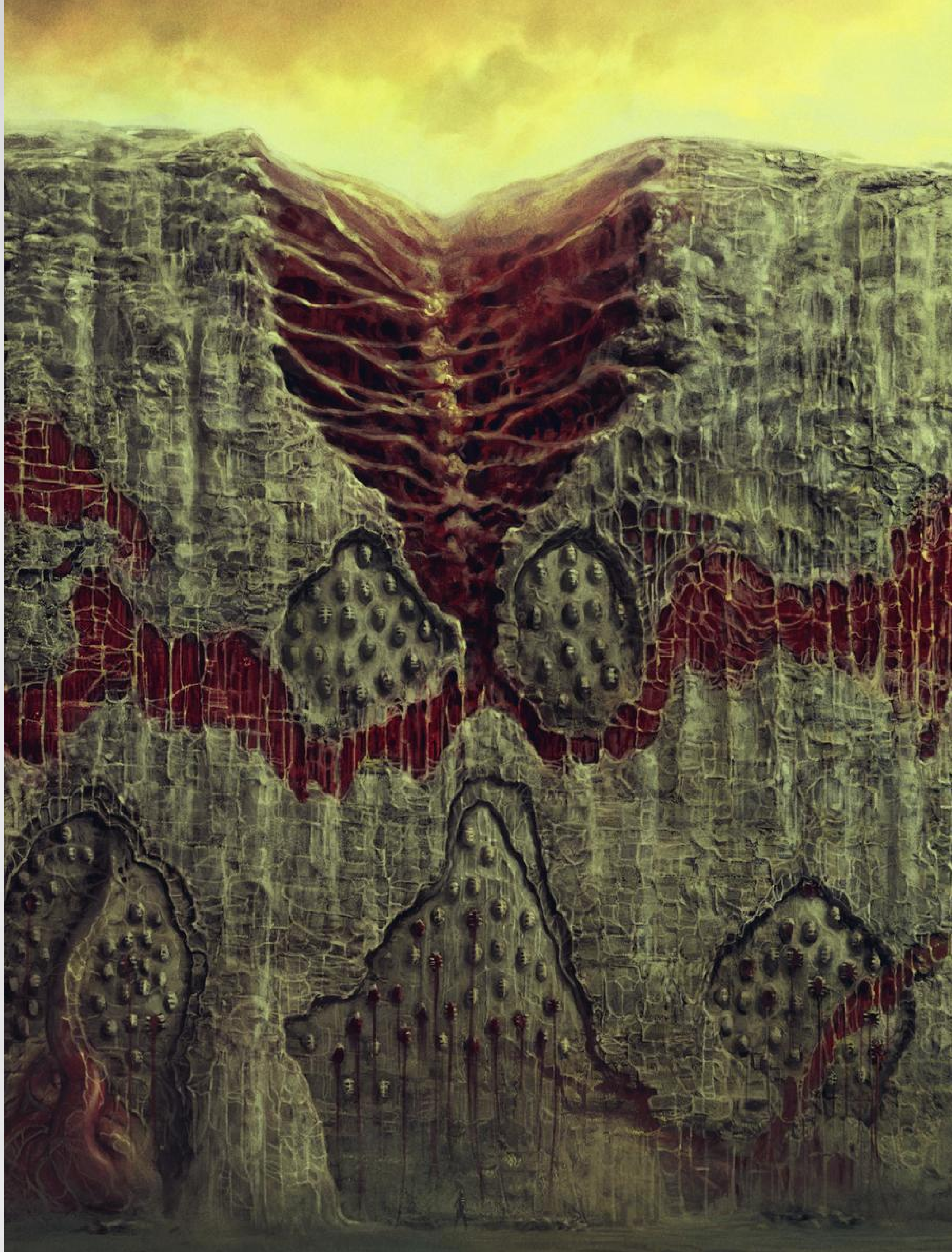
Built not with bricks and mortar but from flesh, organs, and uterine lining, here stands the answer to the question of where *Scorn*'s protagonist originates. The universe's humanoid creations are neither born from a creature or assembled in a lab, but birthed from ruptures on the side of an unnatural embankment the team refers to as the Genesis Wall. "The main character's genesis expressed visually," says game director Ljubomir Peklar. "There is nothing more to it than that." How did it come into being? Why is it this way? "That we are not explaining," he teases.

While questions will forever swirl about the genesis of *this* genesis, *Scorn* doesn't shy away from showing the miracle of birth itself, which begins with humanoids gestating at random spots within the wall's central chamber. When they reach certain sizes, their backs begin to press against the lining, causing it to swell outwards and cradle the growing bulks like pregnant bellies or cocoons.

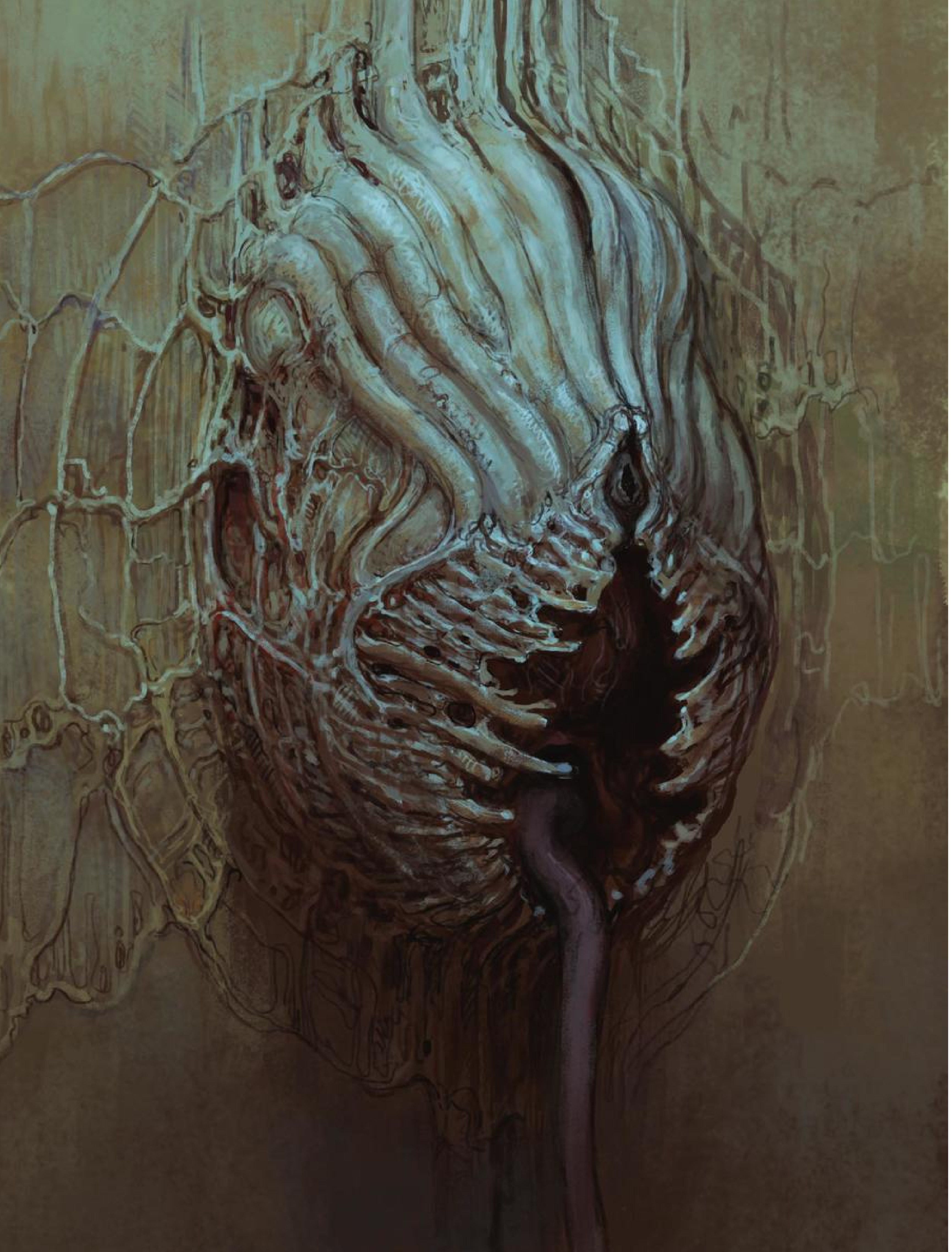
Once the dry epidermal film reaches its breaking point, the cocoon's outer shell cracks and then splinters."It's the drama of birth," says Ljubomir Peklar. "We don't remember that event, but it probably leaves a psychological effect. Prenatal trauma/horror is something Giger also explored in his paintings."

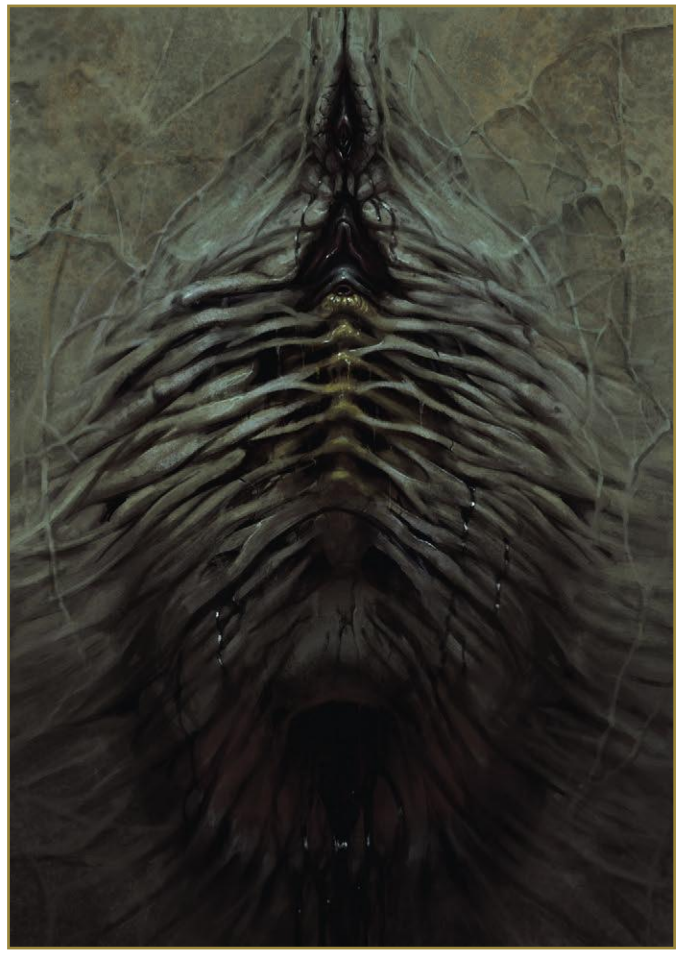
For many newborns released from the shackles of their cocoon, death awaits. Gravity sends them crashing to the floor far below. This cruel randomness underscores the futility of most life, arbitrarily taken away from creatures after just seconds through no fault of their own. In one chilling painting of the wall, rows of decomposing forms lay beneath their gaping cocoons, carcasses fatally shattered by the drop and subsequent impact.

The origins of the wall may be unimportant, but the materials within are far from it. Concept artist Filip Acovic ensured he mapped out the inner organic matter in great detail, sketching various organs and tissue textures compressed together in close proximity. Some of these features appear human at first glance yet under scrutiny differences become pronounced: The dimensions and shapes within match up to the insides of no known species from the animal kingdom, and are those cordyceps features peeking out from beneath certain folds of tissue...?



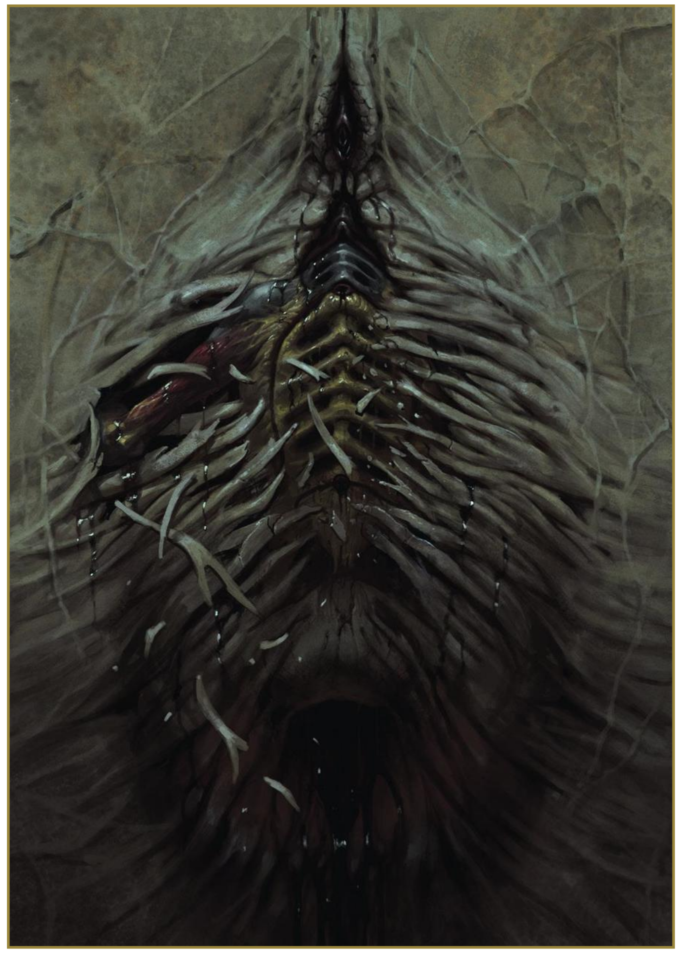
RIGHT The tiny figure at the base of the Genesis Wall helps put its breathtaking height into perspective. Weeping cocoons riddle patches of the wall where the outer layers have chipped away.

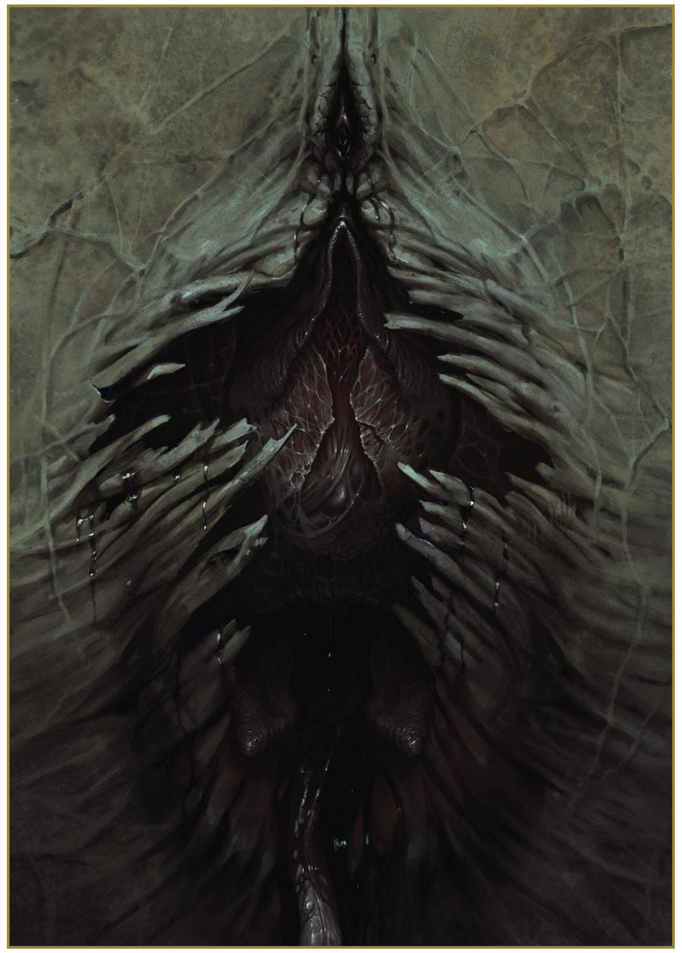




"This was built from remnants of memories percolating in my brain," Acovic says, referring to his prior studies of human anatomy. "I was also thinking about viscera in *Akira*: transformations and weird organs that don't make sense. I didn't want to get bogged down by trying to portray intestines and livers, I instead wanted unexplainable entrails."

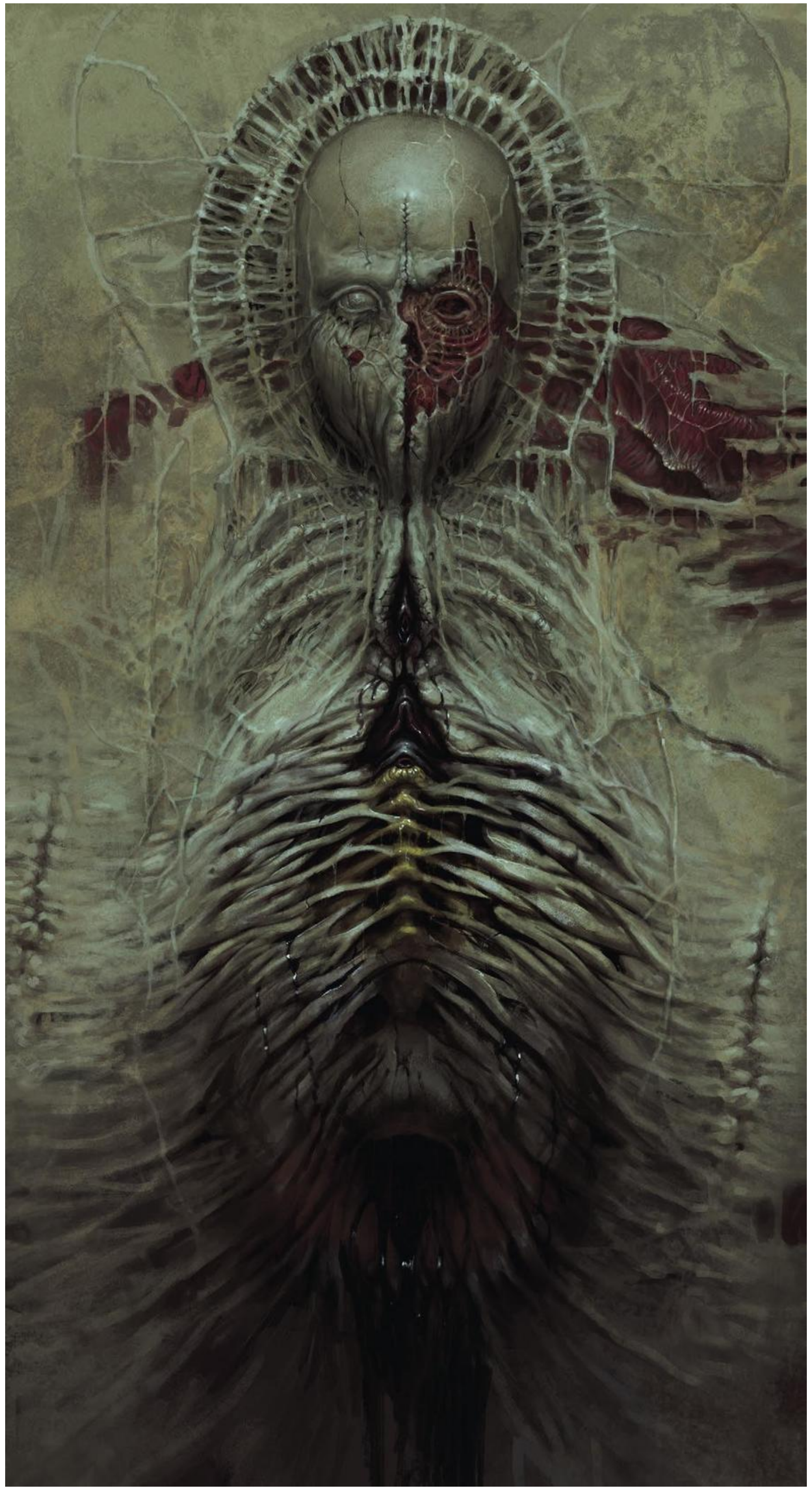
THIS SPREAD Even though the Genesis Wall conducts asexual reproduction, its cocoons are unmistakably gynecological in design to draw parallels with the natural birthing process. Humanoids tumble from these cocoons backwards; Scorn's equivalent of being born breech.



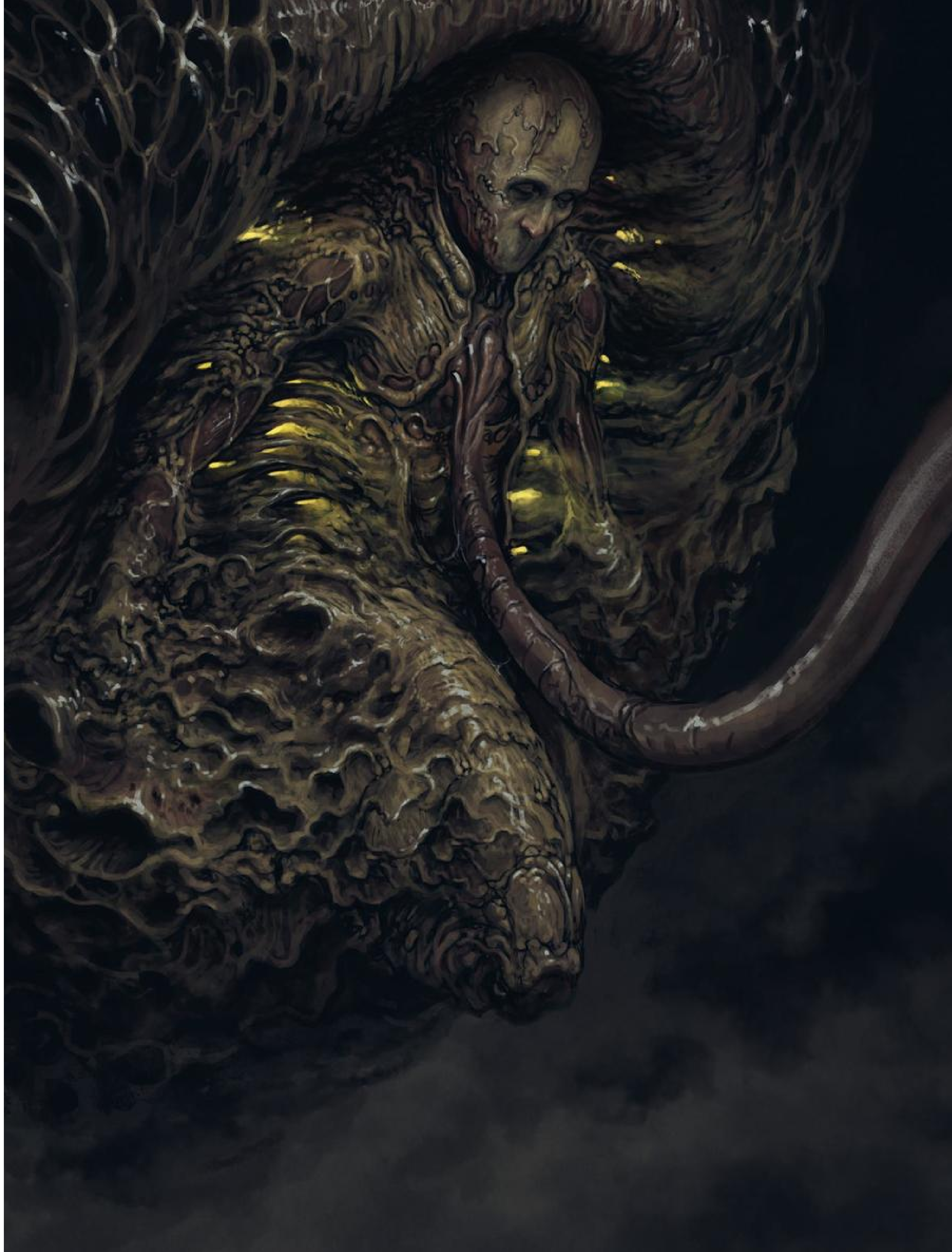


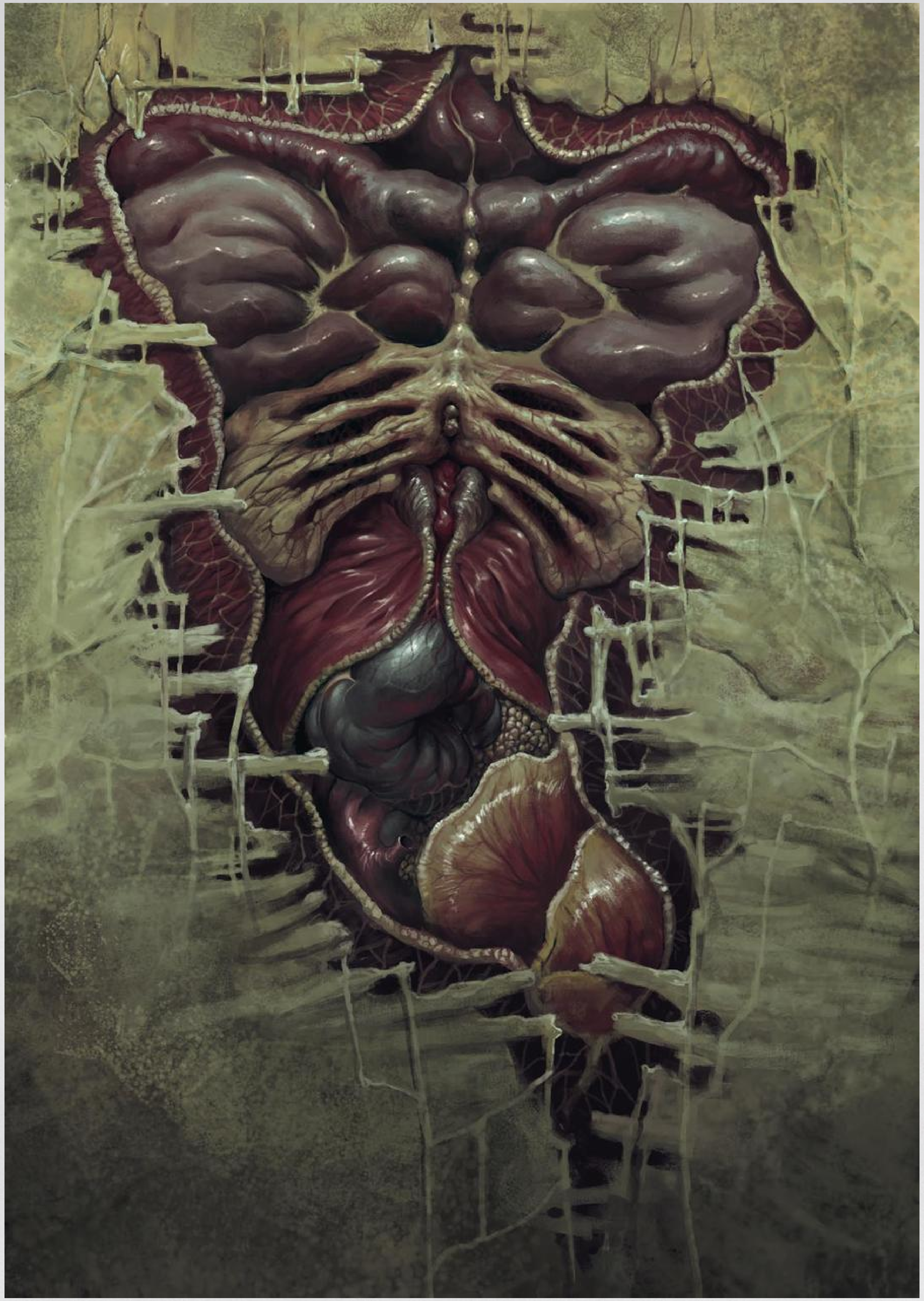
THE WALL

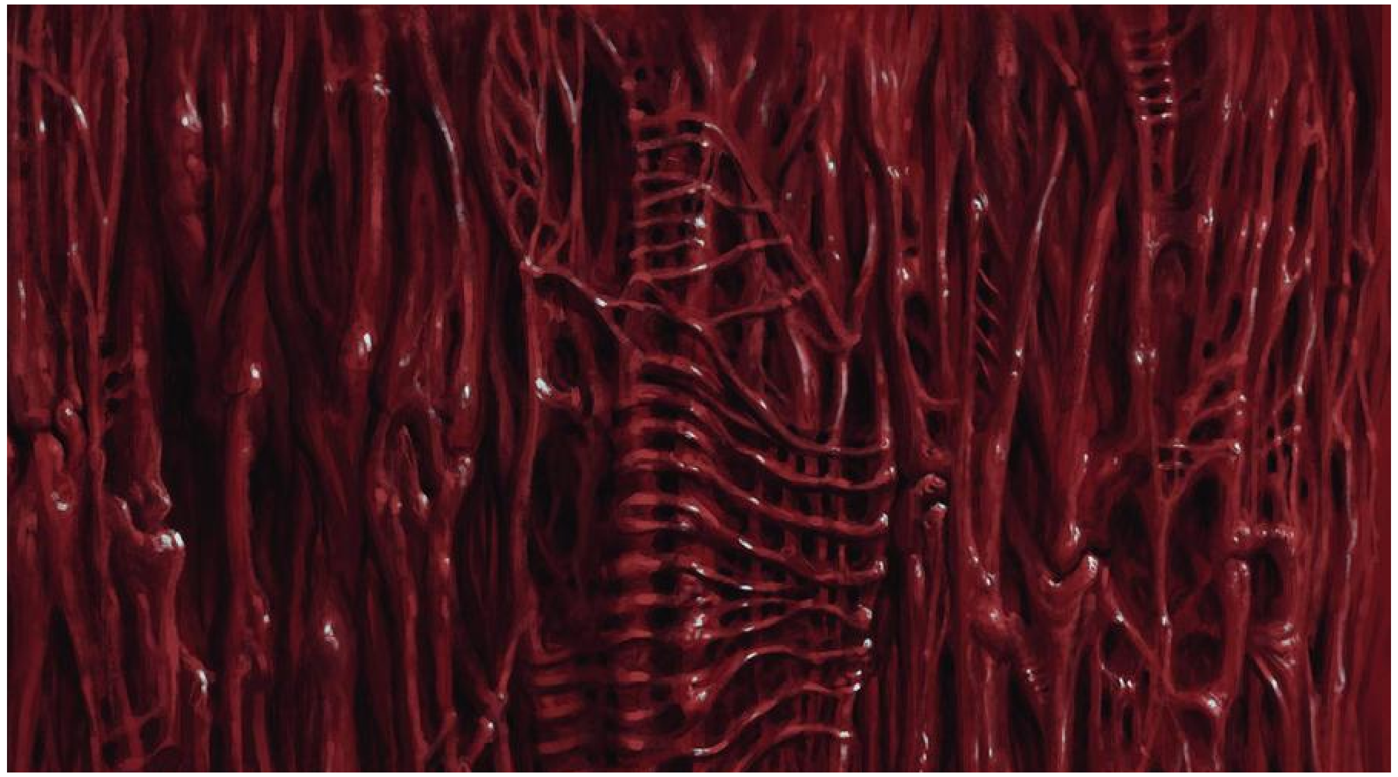
RIGHT The cracked wall's halo effect around the protruding face plays on imagery of Christian saints and the Immaculate Conception.

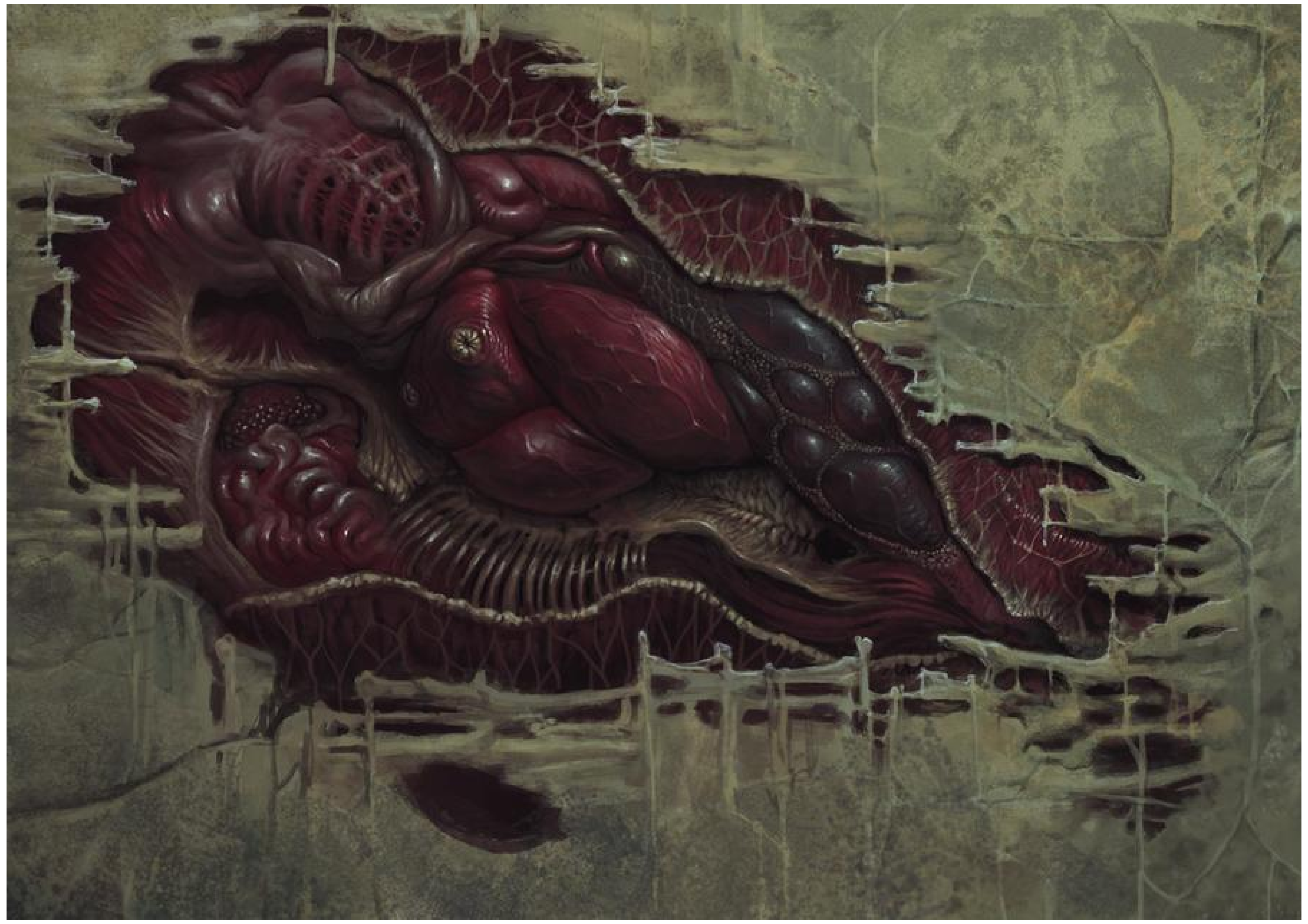


OPPOSITE A view from within the Genesis Wall shows a fetus slowly forming inside the uterine layer. Its back is pressing out into the world, swelling the cocoon surface.

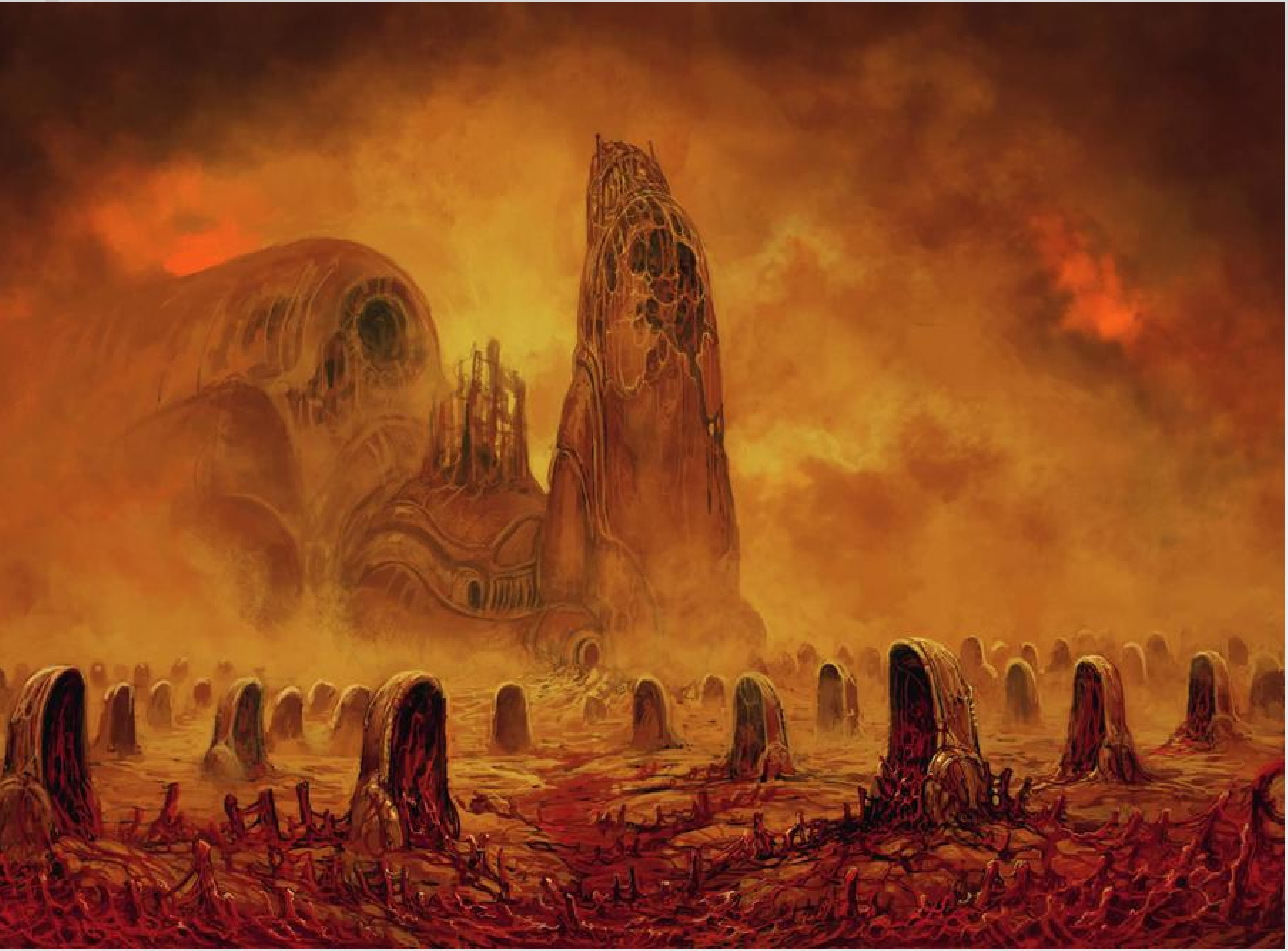








LEFT AND ABOVE "The objective was to create a chaotic mass of random, unexplainable organs pulsating behind the giant structure," says Filip Acovic of the decision to not conduct additional research into anatomy before embarking on the design. "I felt that tying myself to references and focusing on realism, in this case, wasn't the right approach. Sometimes you want to get it wrong and make it a bit confusing on purpose. That's especially true when you're dealing with something as abstract as an enormous, living, birthing wall. Using references is great and should be encouraged, but always relying on them is often limiting. Focusing more on imagination and flawed memory can lead to really interesting results and happy accidents. This design philosophy is relevant to the entire project."



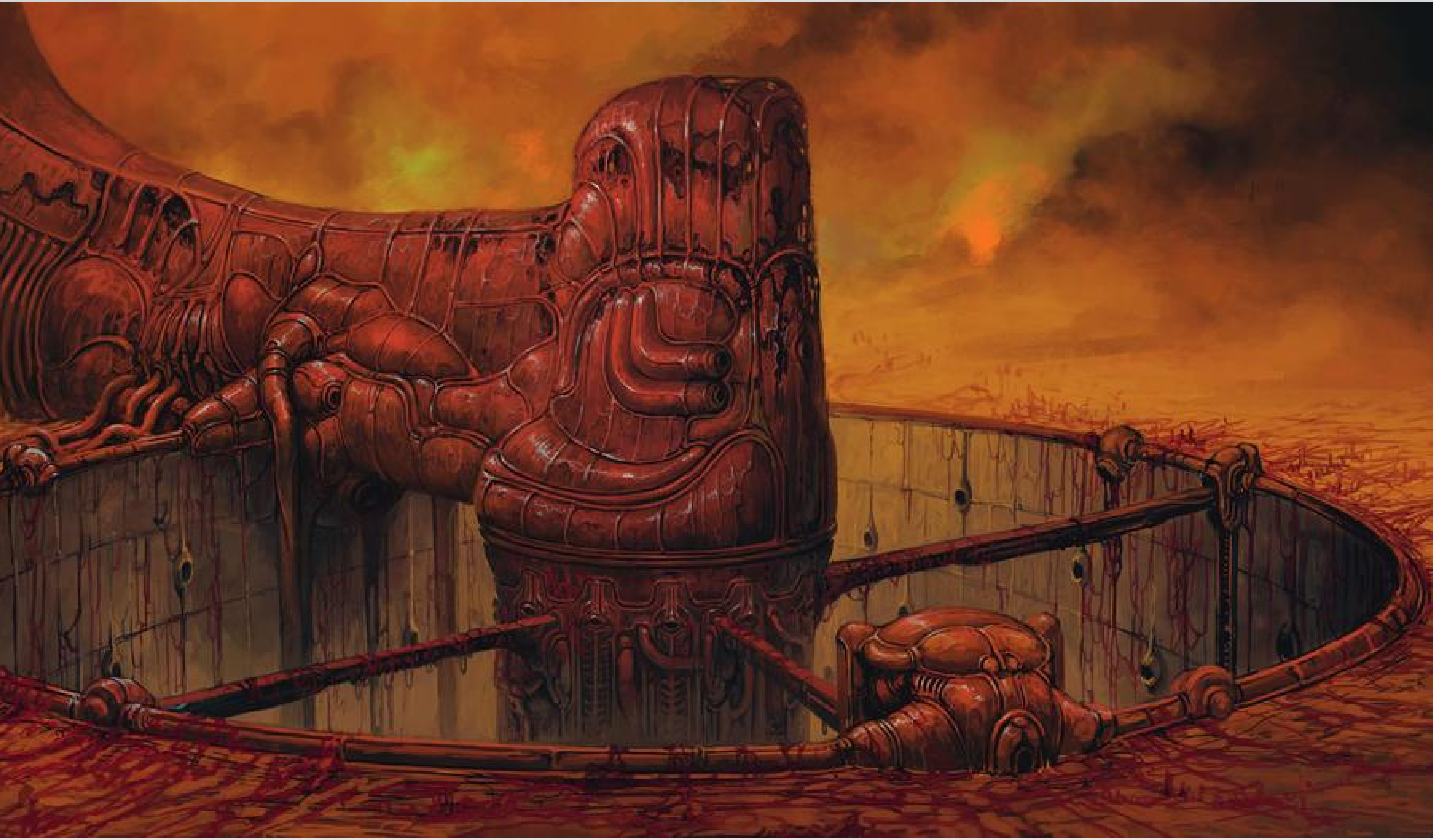
THE FIELD

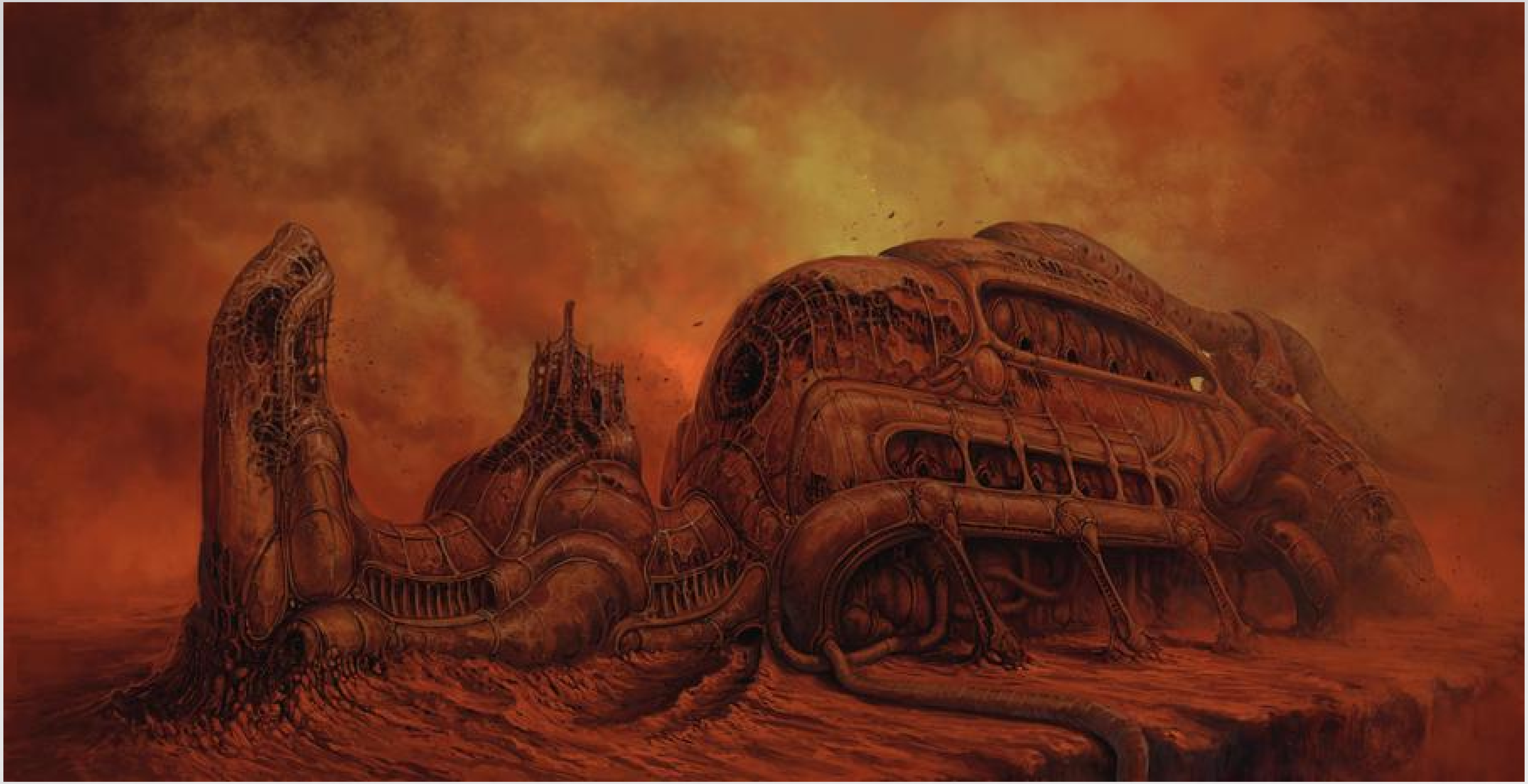
Think of a field and chances are your mind will jump to sunlit, grassy meadows. Somewhere restful and serene. It's possible you may instead think of arable lands: freshly tilled soil, ready for crops to be planted. A source of life, of nourishment. Or perhaps a sports field will pop into your head first? A place of entertainment and vibrant action. Any of these ring true? If so, *Scorn* doesn't care for your thoughts.

"This field is a wasteland," says concept artist Filip Acovic, leaving no debate about this location's role within *Scorn*'s universe. "It should convey this uncaring nature of the world you find yourself in."

This location is a formative space for *Scorn*'s newborn humanoids. Situated a little way into *Scorn*'s runtime, it's technically not the place where players find out how to operate their body, but it is where they begin to learn to fear what lies beyond their own epidermis.

"You have this really low visibility when you're outside," continues Acovic, speaking of the looming fog and short fields of vision. "You can just make out shapes, and only when you approach these structures can you get some idea about what you are looking at."



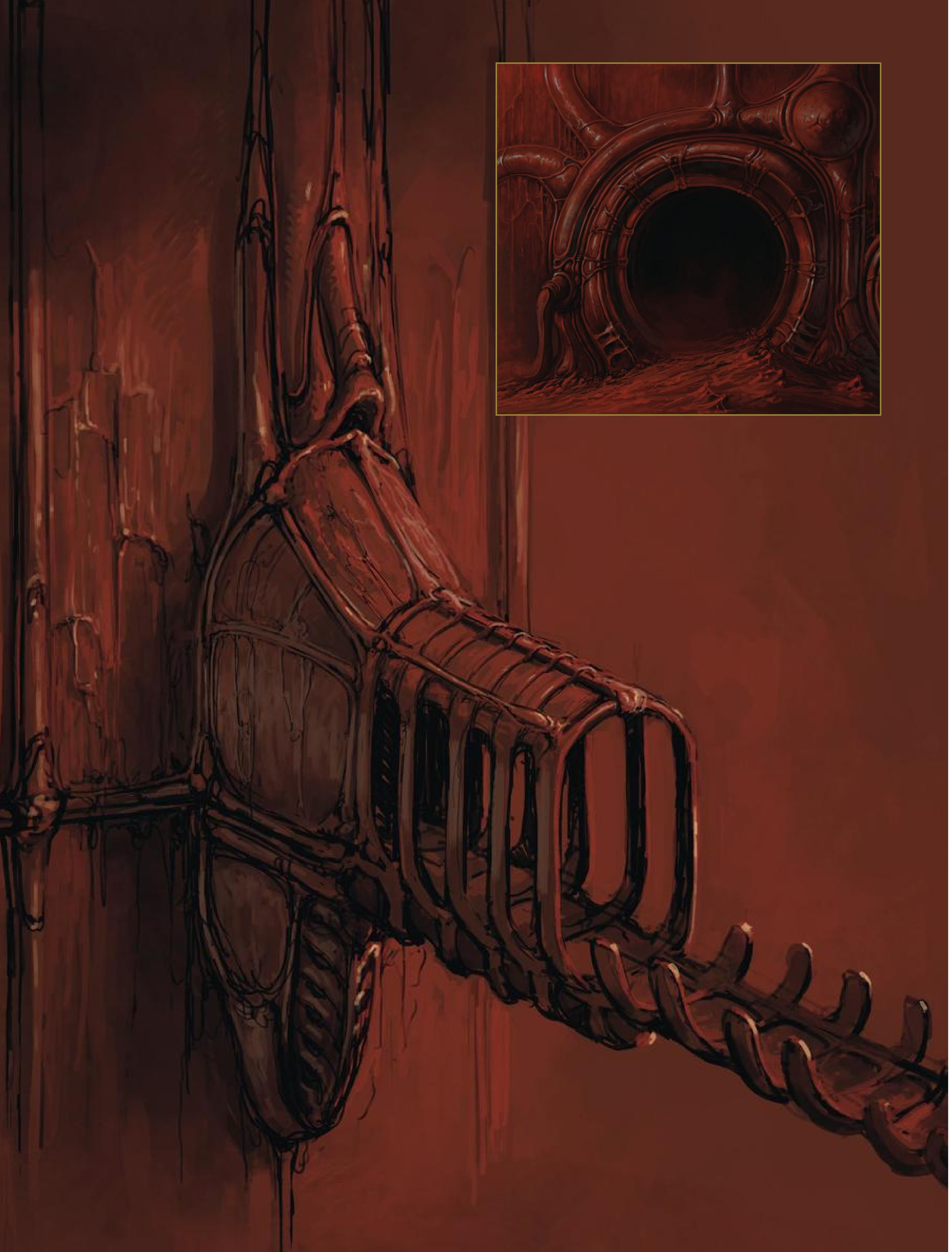


PREVIOUS SPREAD With a central pillar emerging from the horizon like the top of a horrific kitchen mixer, the dimensions of the Crater's entrance are designed to make people recoil. Sheer drops on all sides point to a singular truth: This is a place designed to keep something terrifying trapped inside.

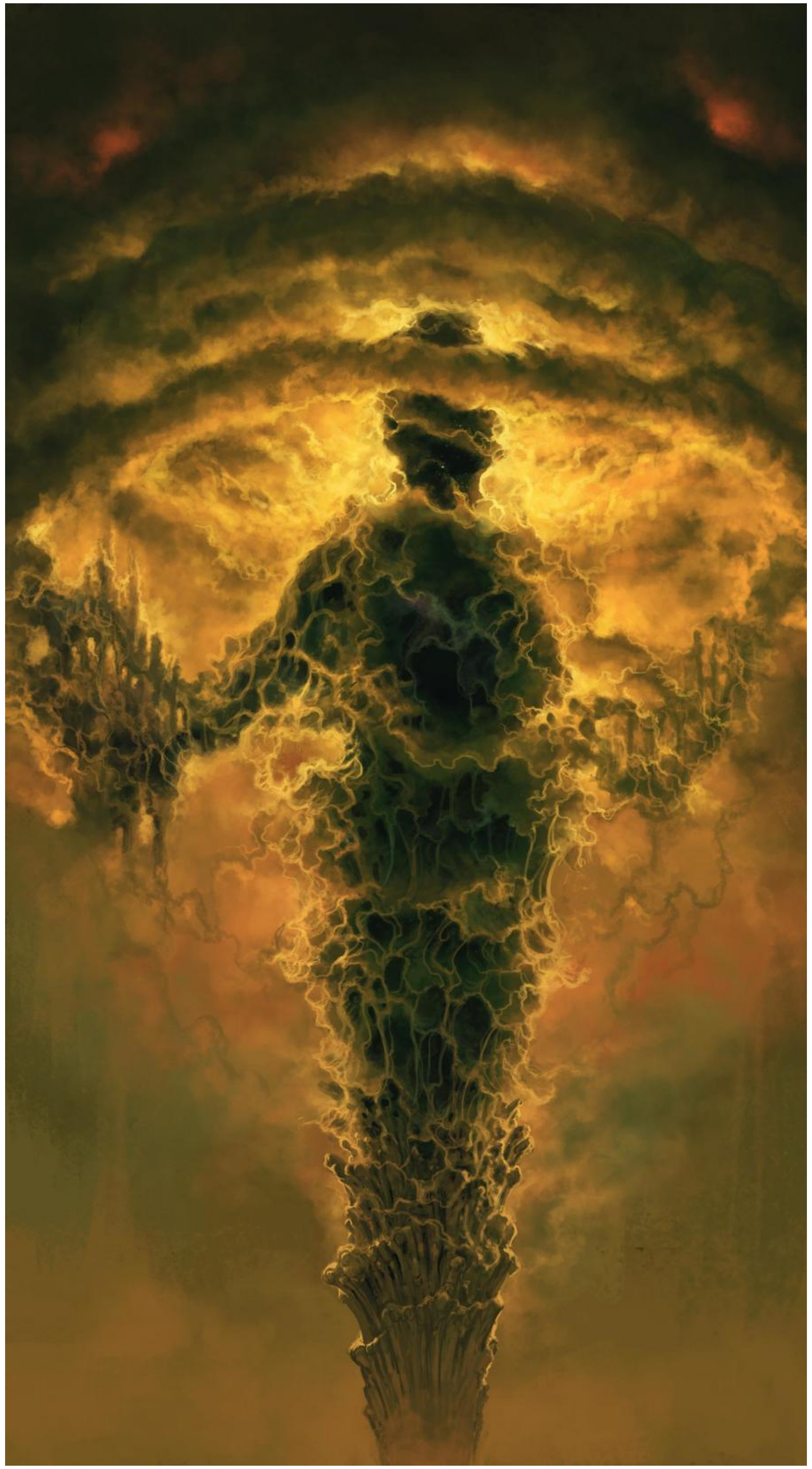
ABOVE From the outside, the Assembly appears every bit as exhausted as it seems from within. It resembles a dehydrated creature collapsed in a desert; skinny legs buckled beneath its mountainous bulk. Its entrance promises protection from the storm, but little in the way of comfort.

"You are literally a newborn with clouded vision, and you don't know where you are, where you are supposed to go, or what you should be doing. The world appears inhospitable, stormy, and dangerous. You are just seeking shelter and these strange, scary forms are slowly revealing themselves through the fog and the wind."

In plotting the visual identity for this wasteland, Acovic leant heavily into desert theming. Wind-whipped sand beds and seemingly endless stretches of dry nothingness contribute to a hardscrabble environment that feels impossible to traverse without aid. Scuttled ship-like features tell tales of devices abandoned to a zone where noone is meant to survive. It's a doomsday vision of an entire world exsanguinated.



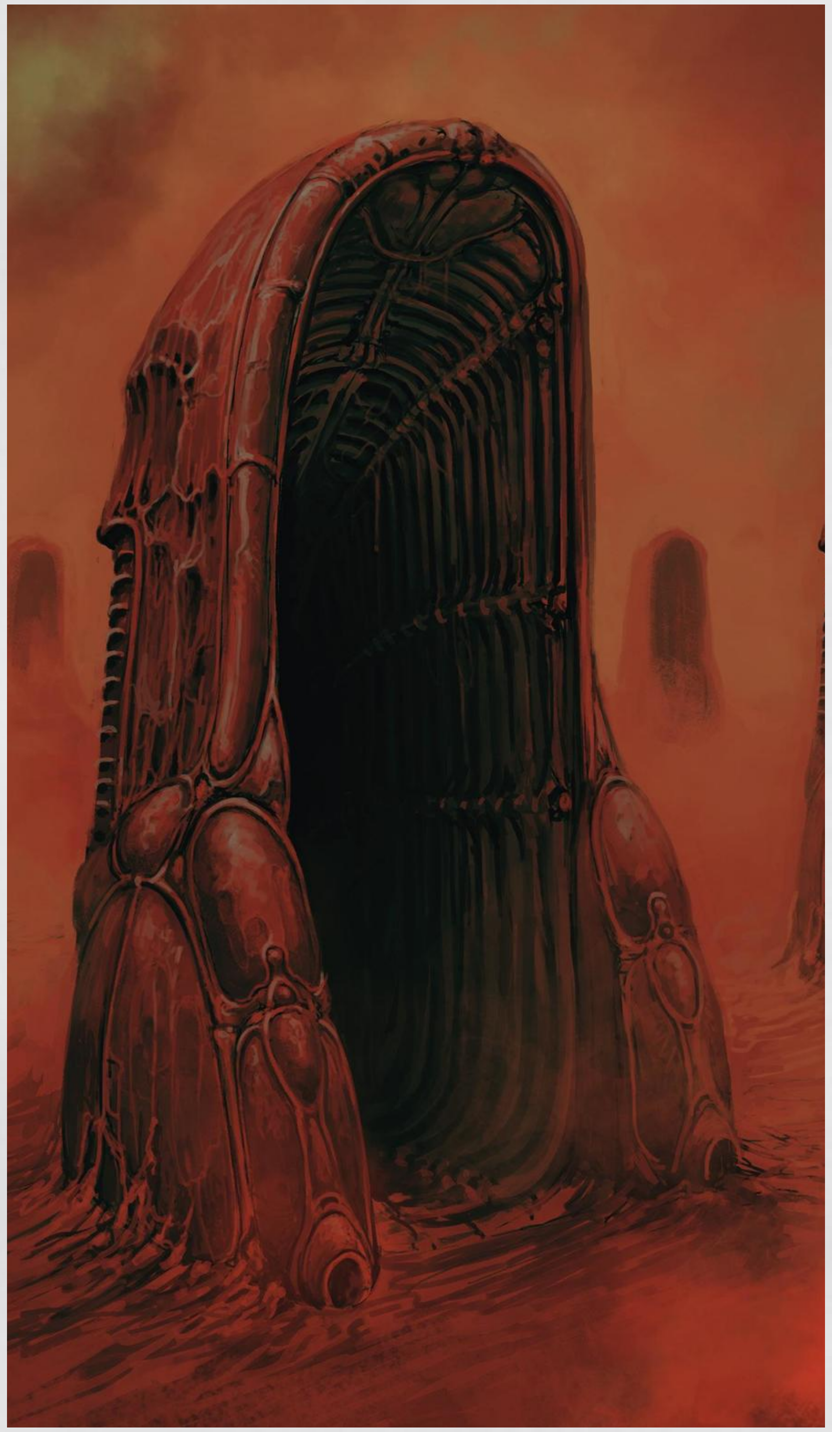
RIGHT The Nexus defies explanation. A place where lightning forks and plumes of smoke seem to blend into one another, you could spend minutes scrutinizing the shapes within and still not feel like you can confidently decide if there's a giant humanoid figure with its arms outstretched in the middle. What does it all mean? Ebb refuses to say, happy to let the Nexus capture attention and lead players to draw their own conclusions.



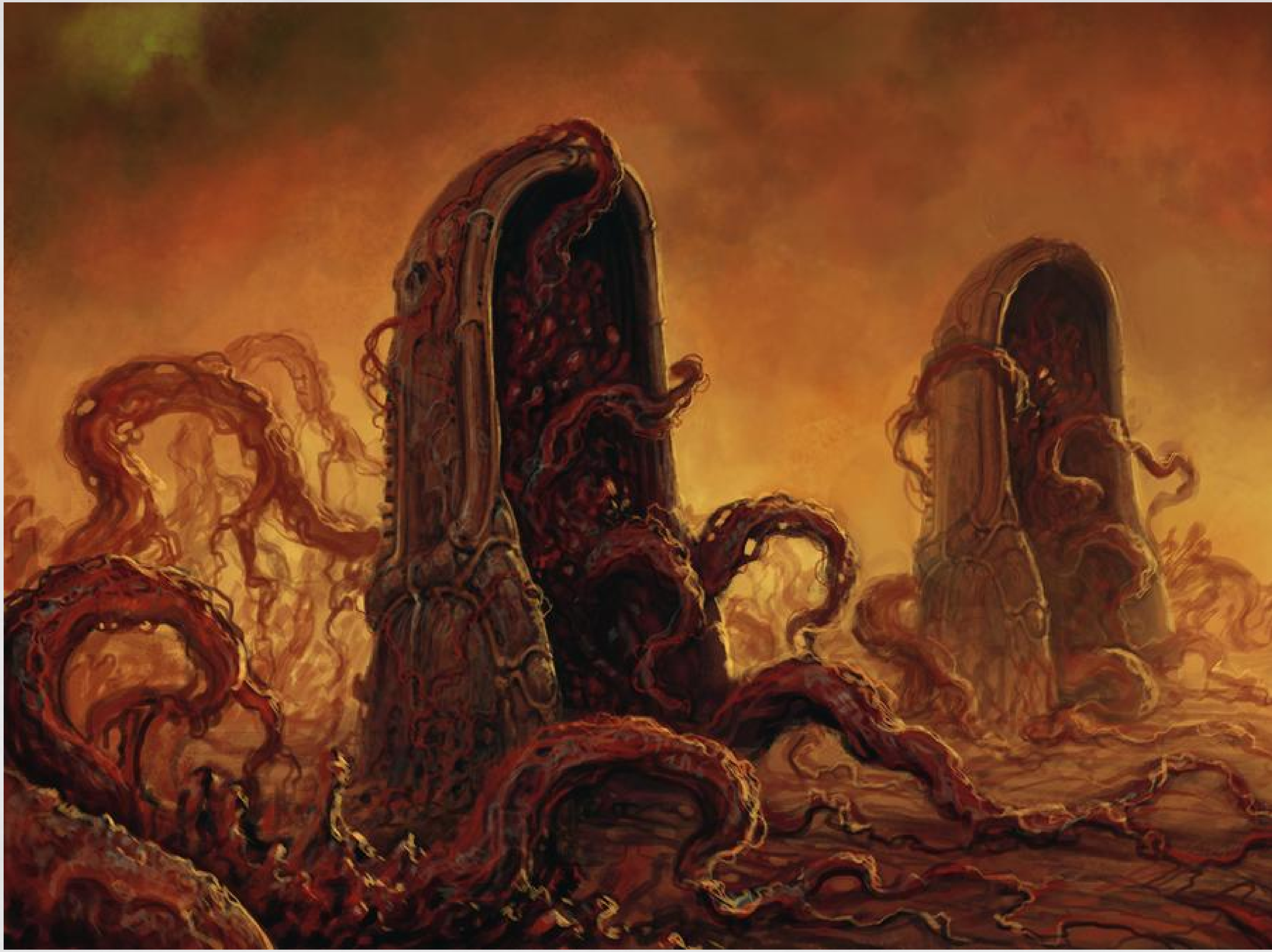
OPPOSITE Precarious platforms without safety walls stretch out across a chasm of stomach-churning depth. Some will marvel at the view and others will feel unease at the exposed trek, but everyone is sure to have a visceral reaction of some description.

Lifelessness became a core tenet when shaping this location's visuals, with the team deliberately shaping its concepts to draw parallels with areas renowned for a dearth of life.

"It's like walking through a mechanical cemetery," says game director Ljubomir Peklar, pointing to the dozens of industrial vents solemnly standing in rows like gaping headstones. "That's what we were trying to convey." There are hints of animal graveyards too, with Peklar comparing the giant factory building to a decomposing creature: A behemothic rhinoceros corpse, its tusks and humped hide first baked in choking heat, then lacerated by the elements.



BOTTOM LEFT Mere months before Scorn's launch there was still a question mark over whether this portal would make the final game. Not because of cuts, but because it was never intended to feature in the first place. "It was made specifically for a trailer," Filip Acovic admits, lifting the lid on the levels of work required to not just build Scorn, but to promote it as well. Created to act as a clever foreshadowing trick, the portal is capped by a parasitic growth, and the camera swooping into its body cavity hints at the fate set to befall players.

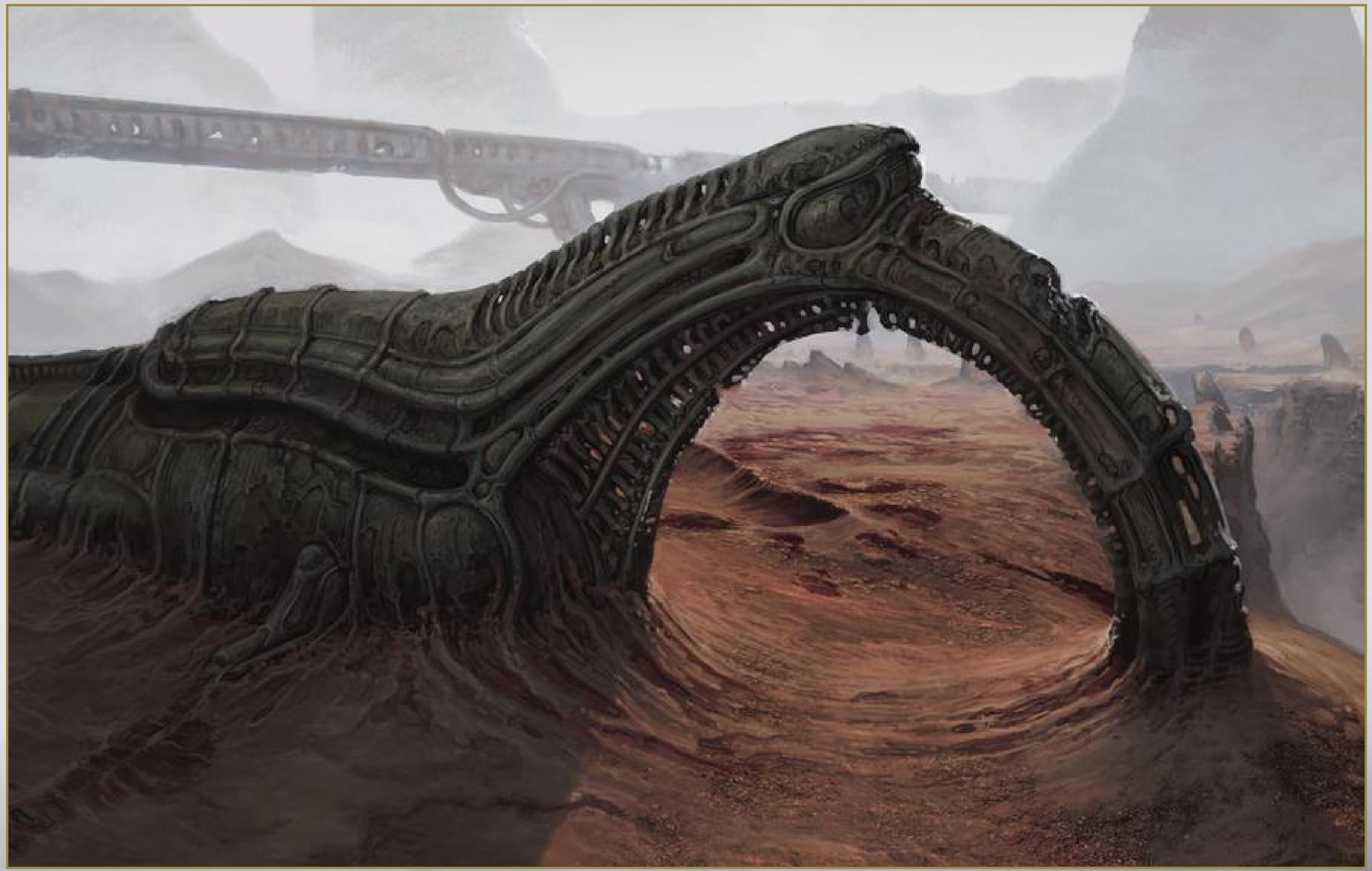


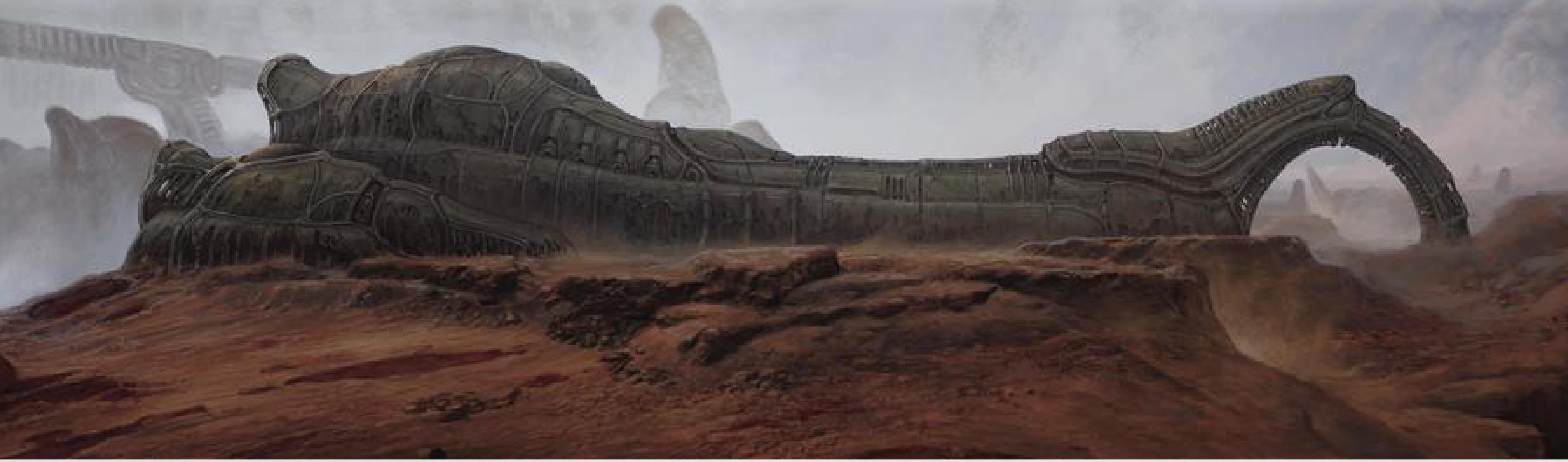
BELOW With unchecked growth clogging up all available space in subterranean tunnels, trails of organic corruption spill out of vents like toothpaste squeezed from a fresh tube.

Yet like stubborn cacti sprouting out from the driest sand dunes on Earth, or microbes defying all odds and thriving inside active volcanoes, here life also finds a way. Those gravestone-like vents unintentionally double as birth canals as corrupted tendrils of flesh chase expelled exhaust fumes from underground lairs and into the open, teasing the horrors that lurk below for anyone who dares cross the threshold.

BELOW Scorn isn't set on an alien world, but in the Field you'd be forgiven for questioning whether there were extraterrestrial visitors about. Evoking crashed ship imagery from movies such as *Alien* and *Prometheus* taps into fears of the unknown, and ensures players are constantly questioning what lies ahead.

RIGHT While the Field is an open area to explore, pathways that trail through archways instinctively pull players in the right direction. Geometries such as this ensure players don't get turned around without resorting to explicit directions or overt markers or UI guidance features.





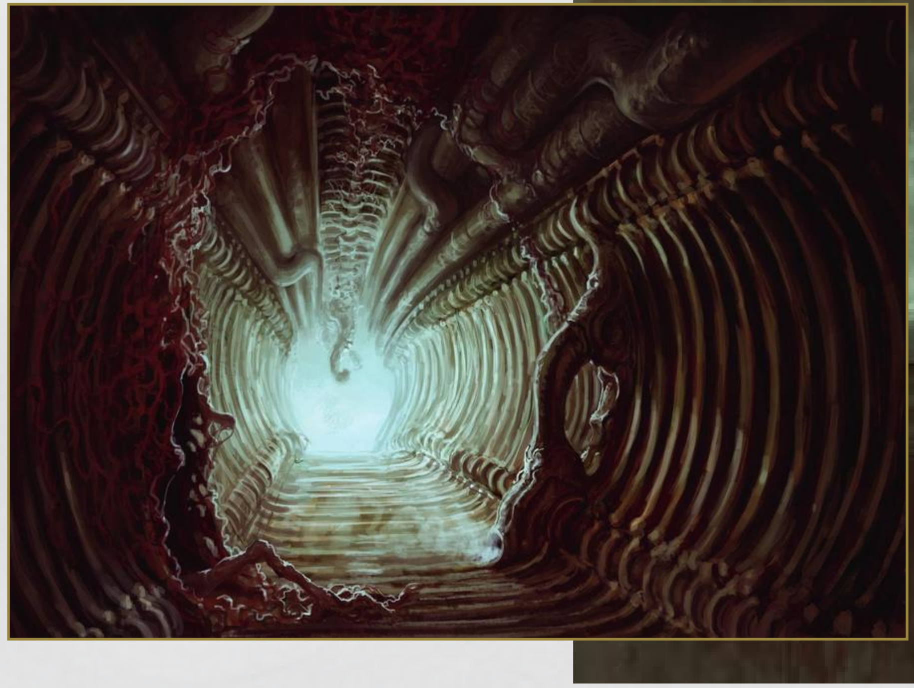
THE CRATER

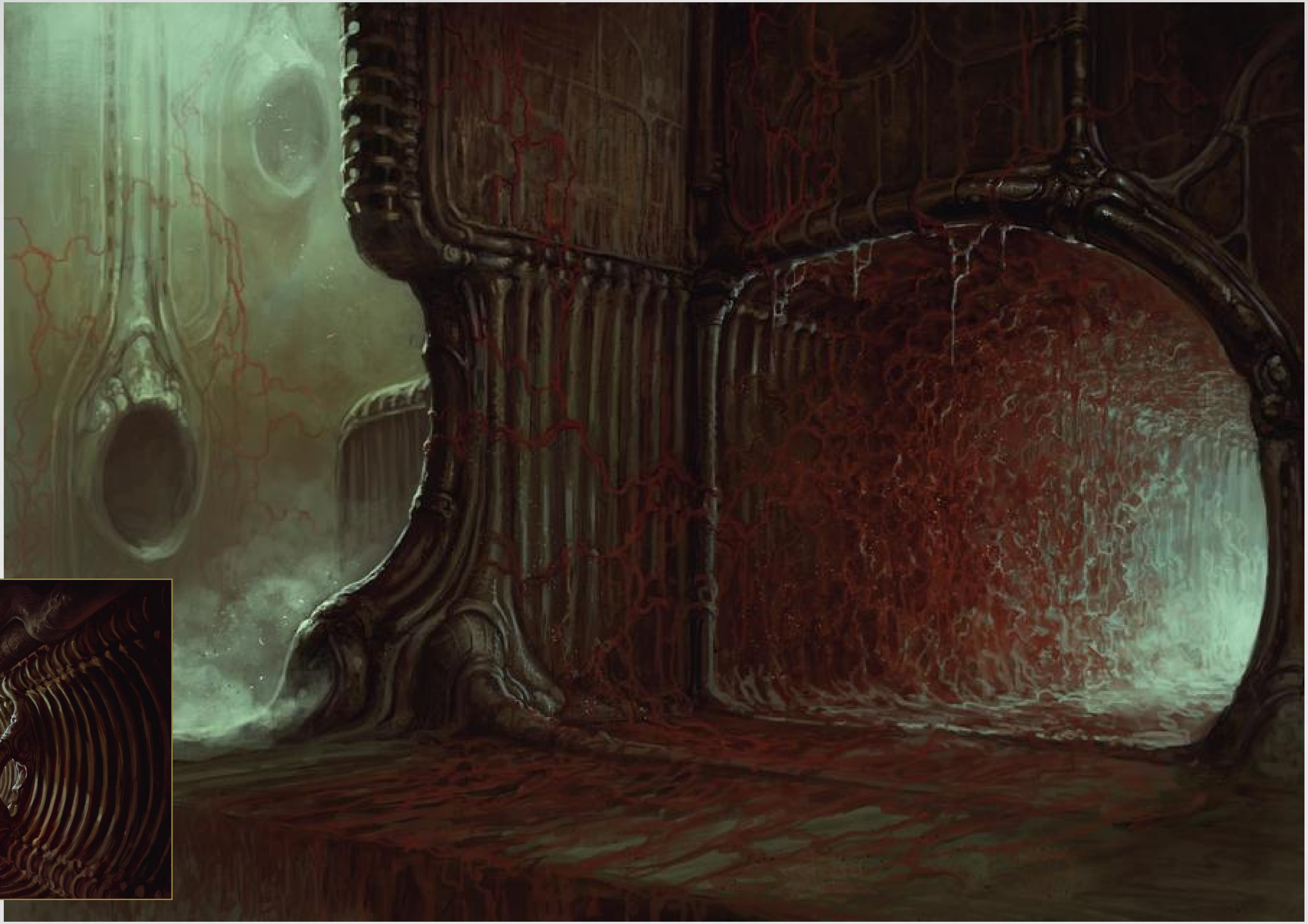
From the perspective of the desolate, unprotected surface of the Field, the location nicknamed the Crater looks heavenly: a giant cylinder bored vertically into the ground like a storm drain, promising warmth, refuge from exposure, and a moment of respite from whatever prowls through the fog above. Who could possibly have predicted that it would soon reveal itself to be a perilous descent into horrors untold?

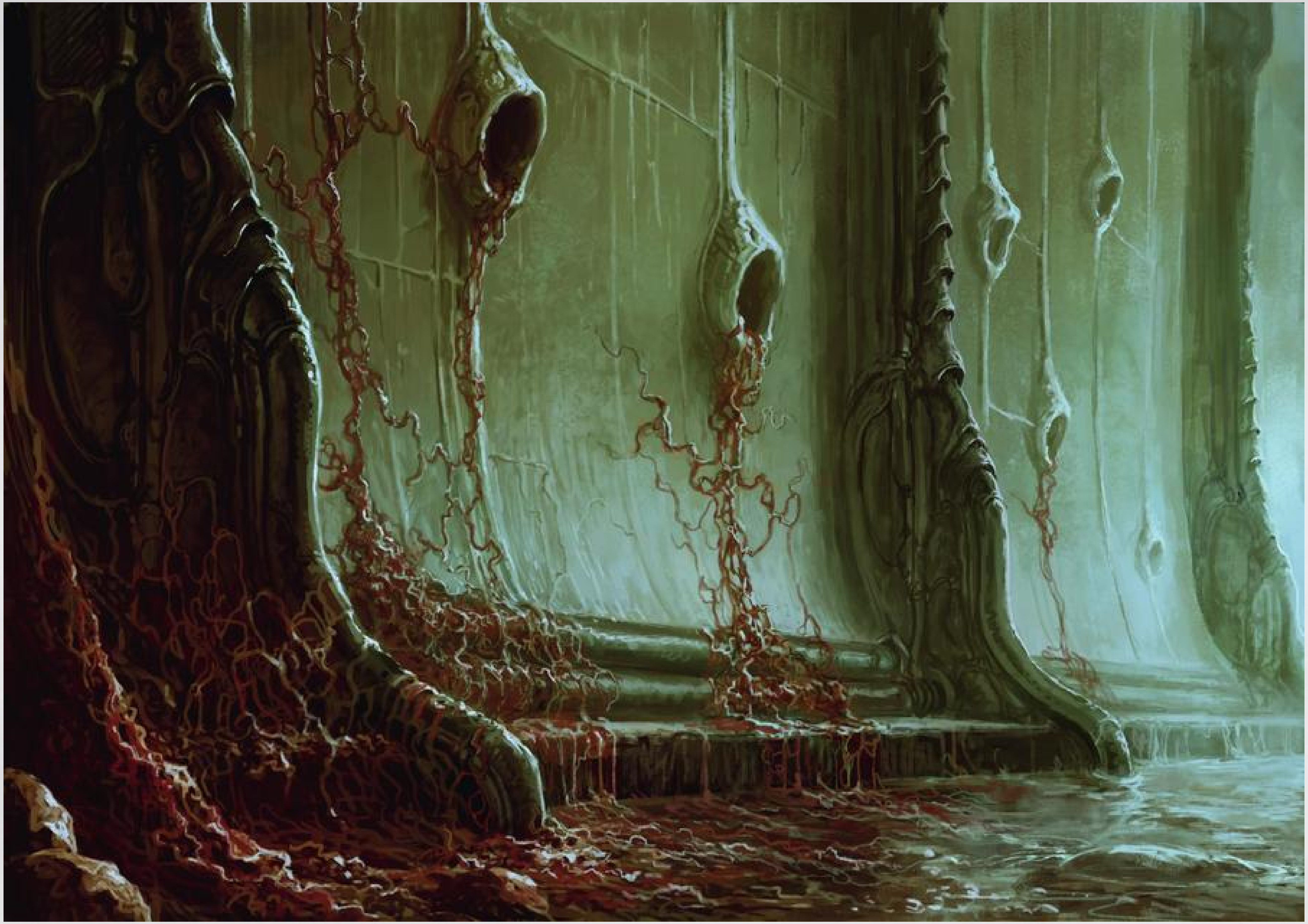
A plunging central drop of stomach-churning depth crisscrossed with suspended walkways, the Crater's outer walls are woven with hallways. Eggsack windows are spread throughout the structure, pockmarking the circumference at heights of pleasing irregularity. The source of this location's malignancy comes in the distended shape of a resident queen monster. She sits at the base of the pit and churns out young at machine-gun pace to transform the potential shelter into a near-inescapable feeding pit.

RIGHT Layered build-ups of corrupted tendrils indicate large volumes of Crater creatures have traveled certain paths. It's a device that can be used to foreshadow encounters and instill dread.

BELOW The narrow bore and 360-degree ribbed surfaces make Crater spelunking feel like journeys through tracheas and esophagi.







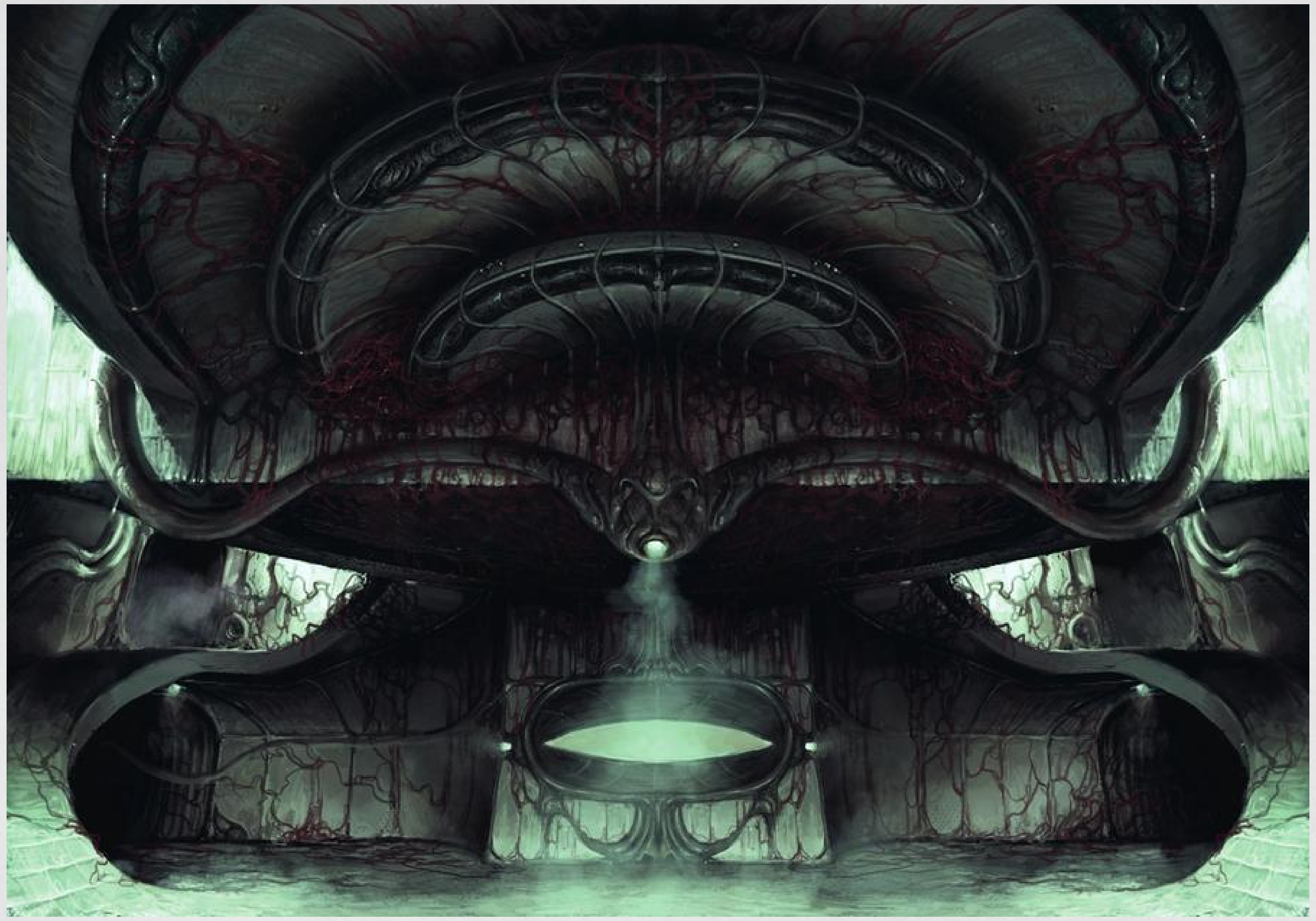
The brood strong enough to tear free from their siblings spend their first moments of life dragging themselves up to these windows and shuffling through to infest other regions. "Like ants taking over your house," game director Ljubomir Peklar suggests. If so, they're ants by way of snails, leaving trails of organic residue to infect every surface. This queen and her spawn are examined in more detail elsewhere (see p124), however, and shouldn't detract from the levels of care poured into the design of the location itself.

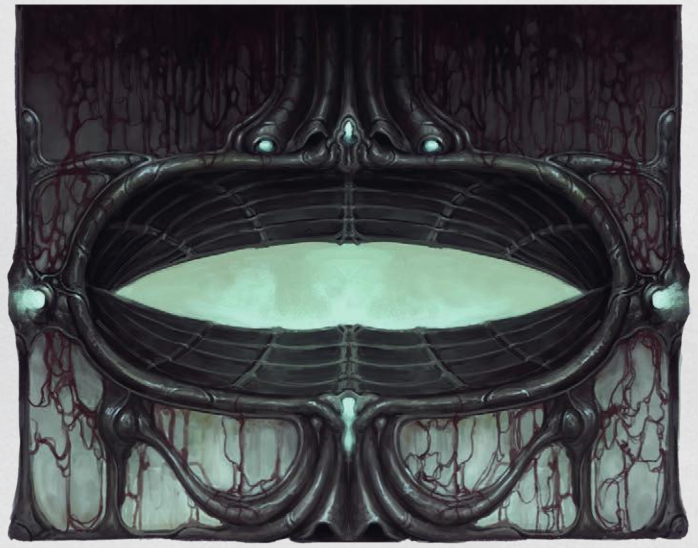
Those aforementioned blighted surfaces are designed with extraordinary detail. Chitinous columns buttress the curved walls like the legs of cyclopean locusts, burred tibia angled to offer no purchase for would-be boulderers seeking escape, and sharpened ungues plunged deep into the standing fluid. Larger viewing portals bulge from the surfaces like elongated boils, bordered by arterial tubes and sliced open across the middle to allow unrestricted views across the chasm.

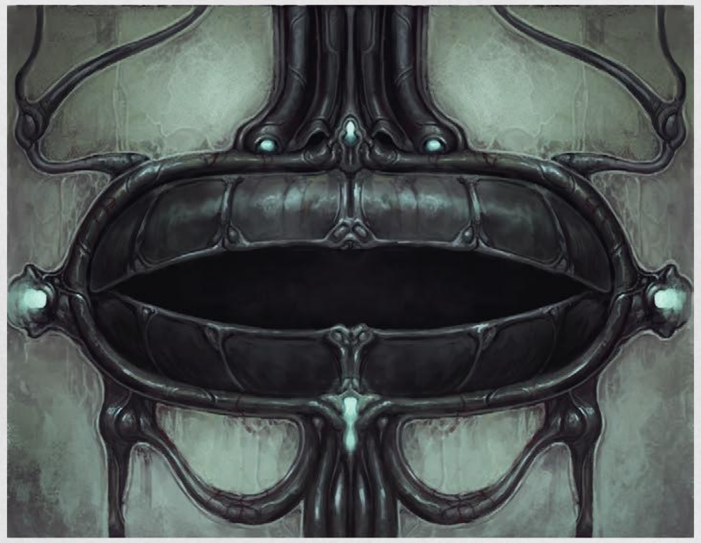
LEFT In a reverse of the Genesis Wall's birthing cocoons, these holes are exit points. Crater creatures drag themselves up and through the tunnels to escape the Crater's central chamber, shedding sticky organic residue as they travel.

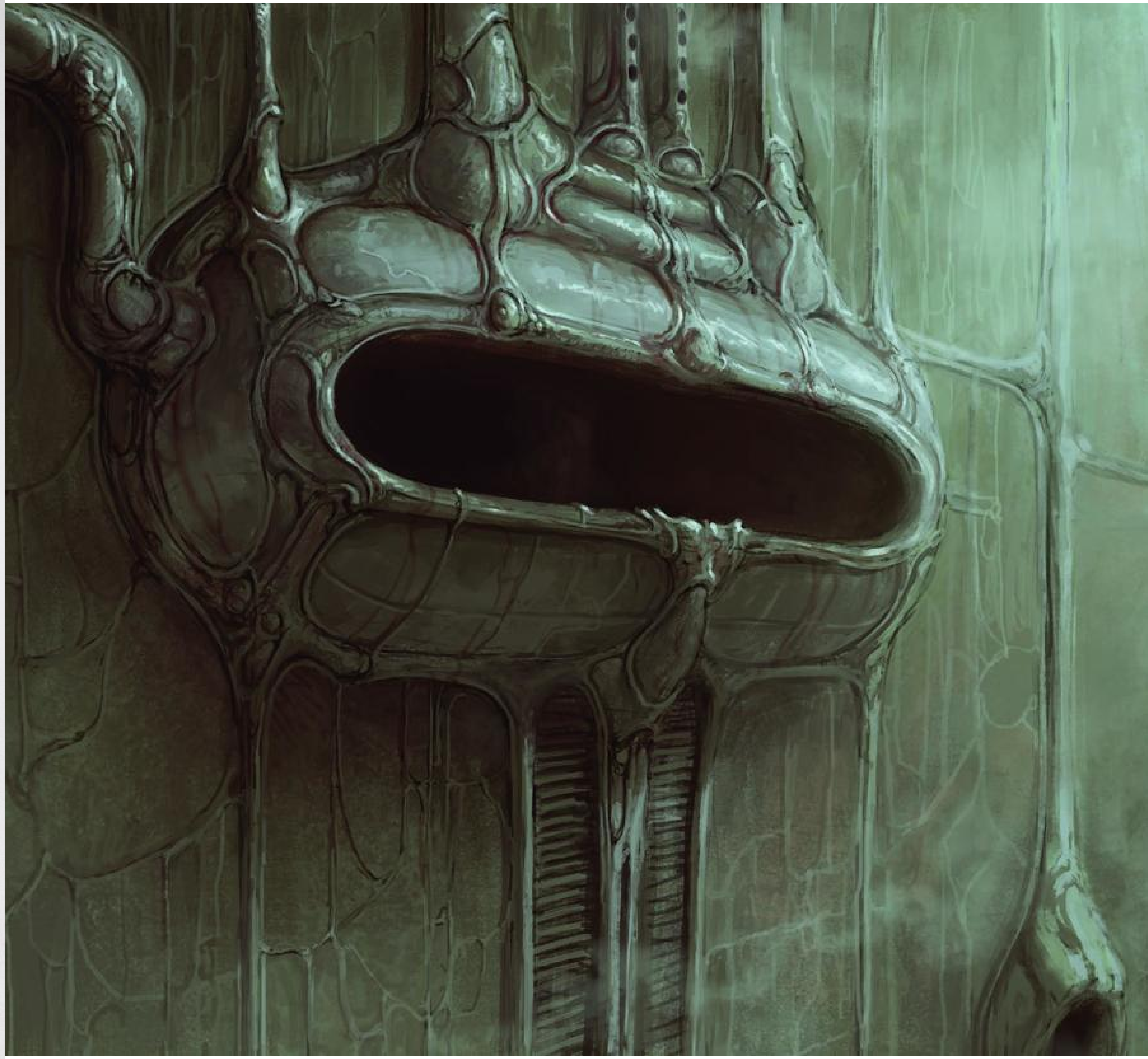
BELOW This location's function is one of a giant maternity ward for the monster queen, but any uterine system parallels you may spy are unintentional and purely down to interpretation. When asked if this artwork deliberately evokes the shapes of fallopian tubes and the womb, Filip Acovic dismisses the notion.

"These designs happened organically. I didn't even think about that," he explains. "It's always interesting when there is some room for interpretation. It feels less forced. You will see one thing and I'll see something else. That's fine. It's nice when your subconscious kicks in and you question yourself: 'Am I seeing this thing? Is it just me?'"



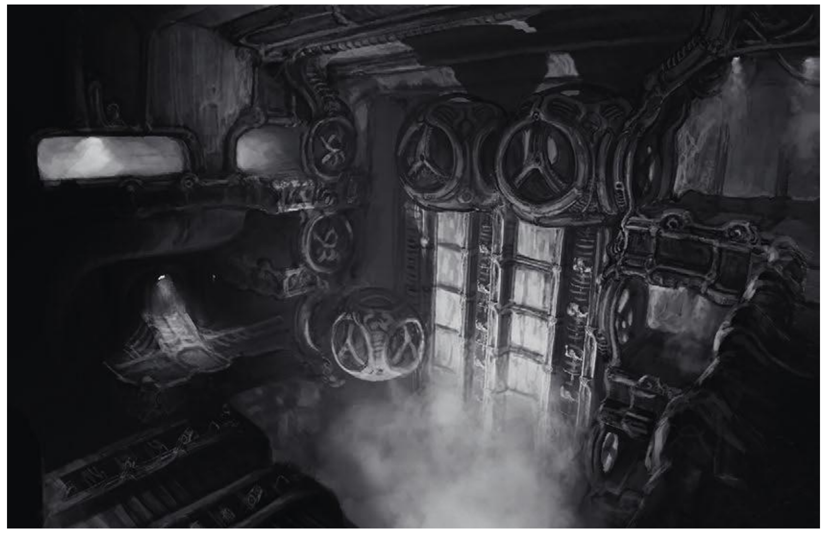






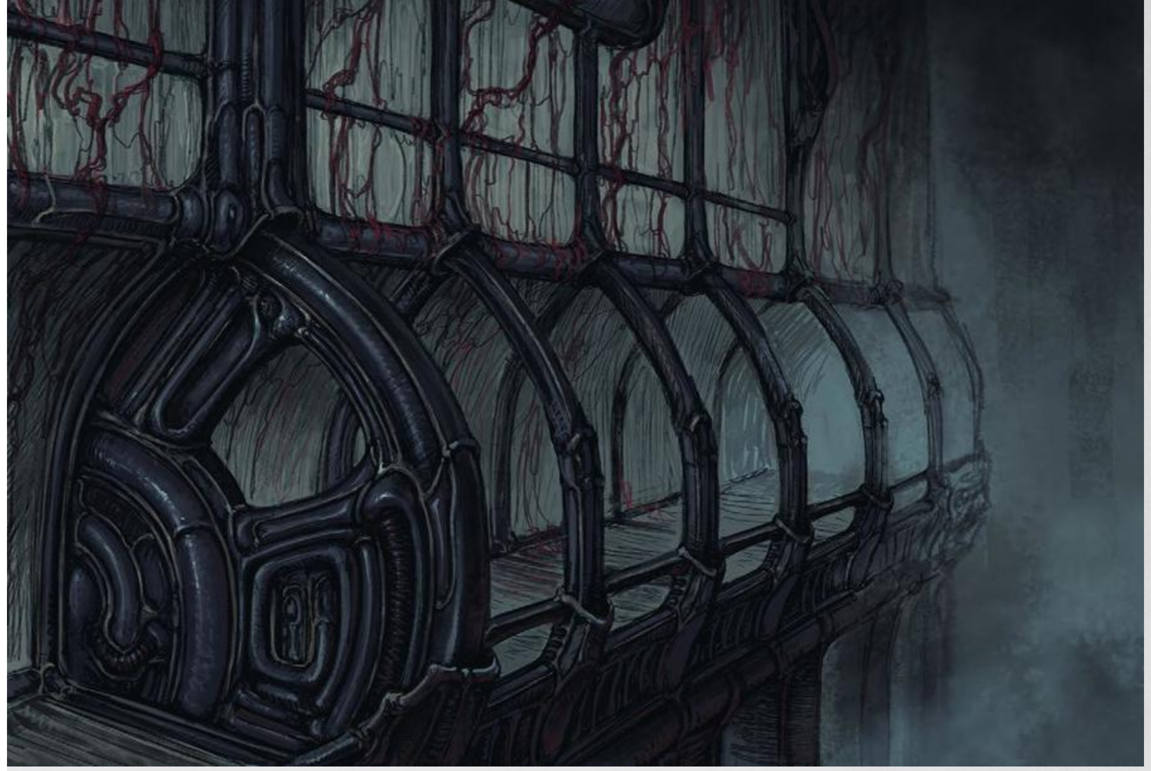
A consistent rule across *Scorn*'s structural design philosophies is one of hard surfaces encasing organic matter. Common western architecture is often predicated upon the ideas of solid, load-bearing material—brick or stone—being covered and coated in paint or in softer, more aesthetically pleasing materials. Ironically, like the human body: a hard skeletal structure of bone, wrapped in softer, more appealing casing. In *Scorn* the inverse applied. Embankments of organs and cartilage form the bulk of a structure's strength, with the outer casing serving to just regulate its shape like an exoskeleton.

ABOVE Control rooms and monitoring stations feature wide-open viewing portals to wordlessly signpost upcoming locations of significance.

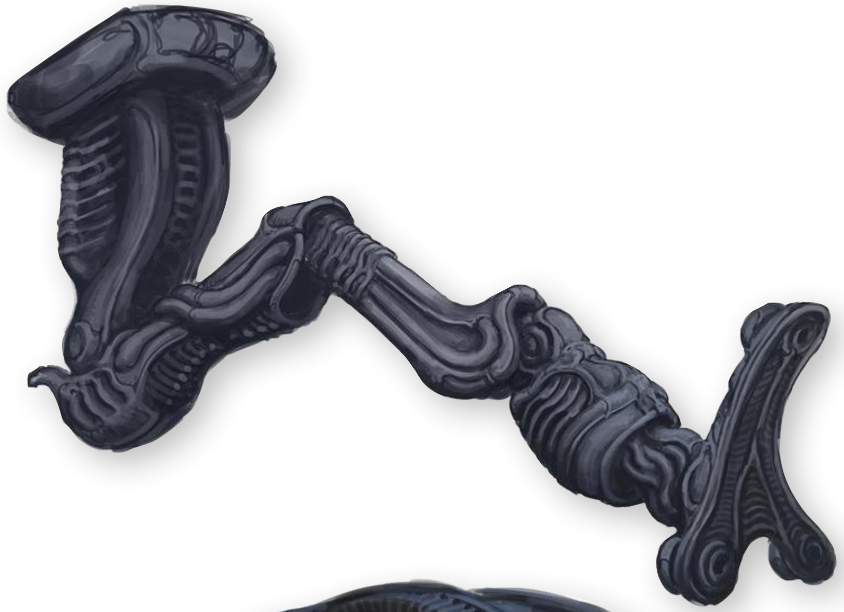


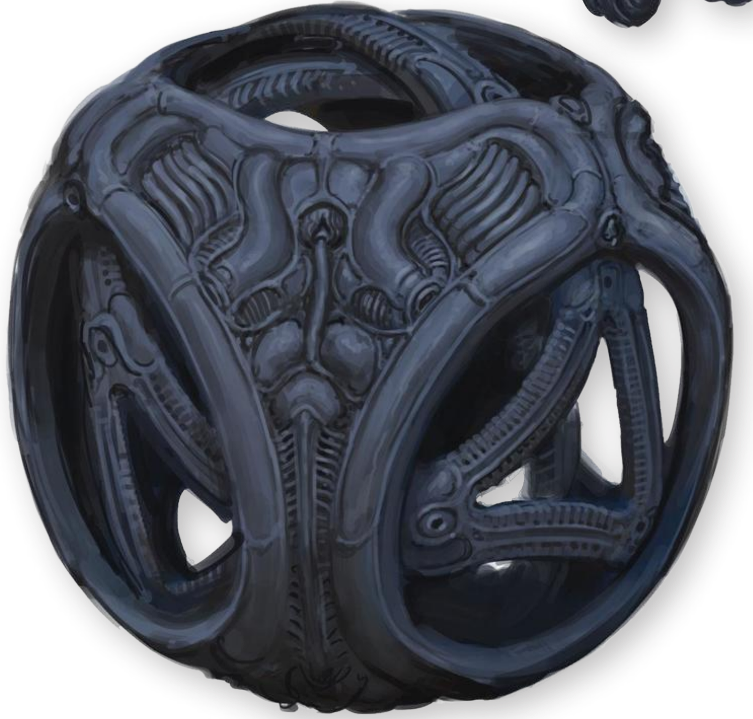
LEFT AND BELOW LEFT Rotating transport spheres and their associated clamps feel like a technological leap beyond the retro machinery found within the first location, the Assembly.

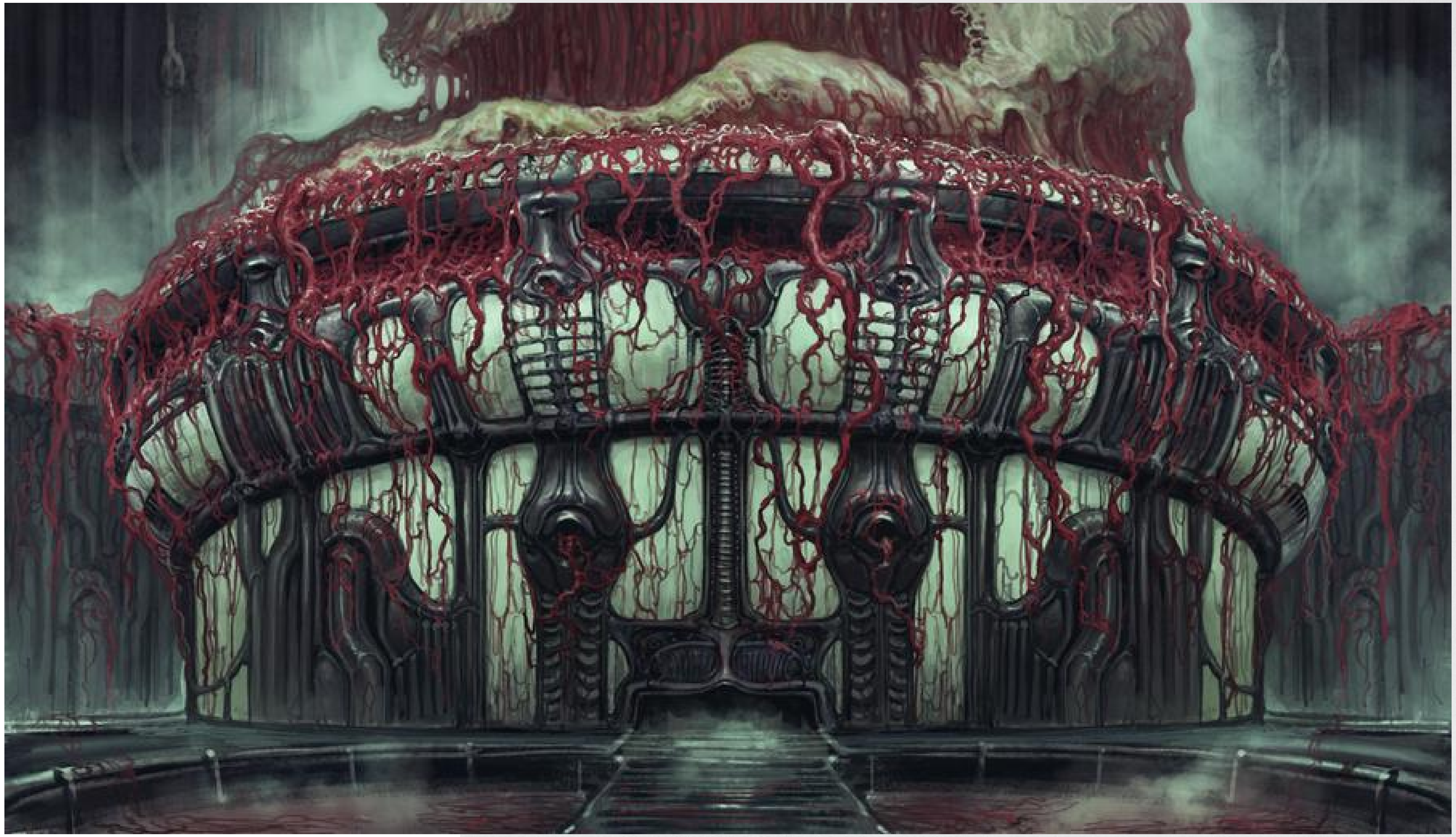
BELOW RIGHT The Crater queen lies on top of a vast raised plinth, where it can be monitored from most of the location's vantage points. A honeycomb of chambers and holes inside the plinth act as sluices for cast-off corpuscles.



LEFT Not for the first time, Acovic experimented with different doorways and gating systems during the concept phases. Here a giant wheel embedded within the wall spins round, acting as a rotary disk choke valve to limit access to the bridge beyond. It's a design that made the final game with minimal changes.

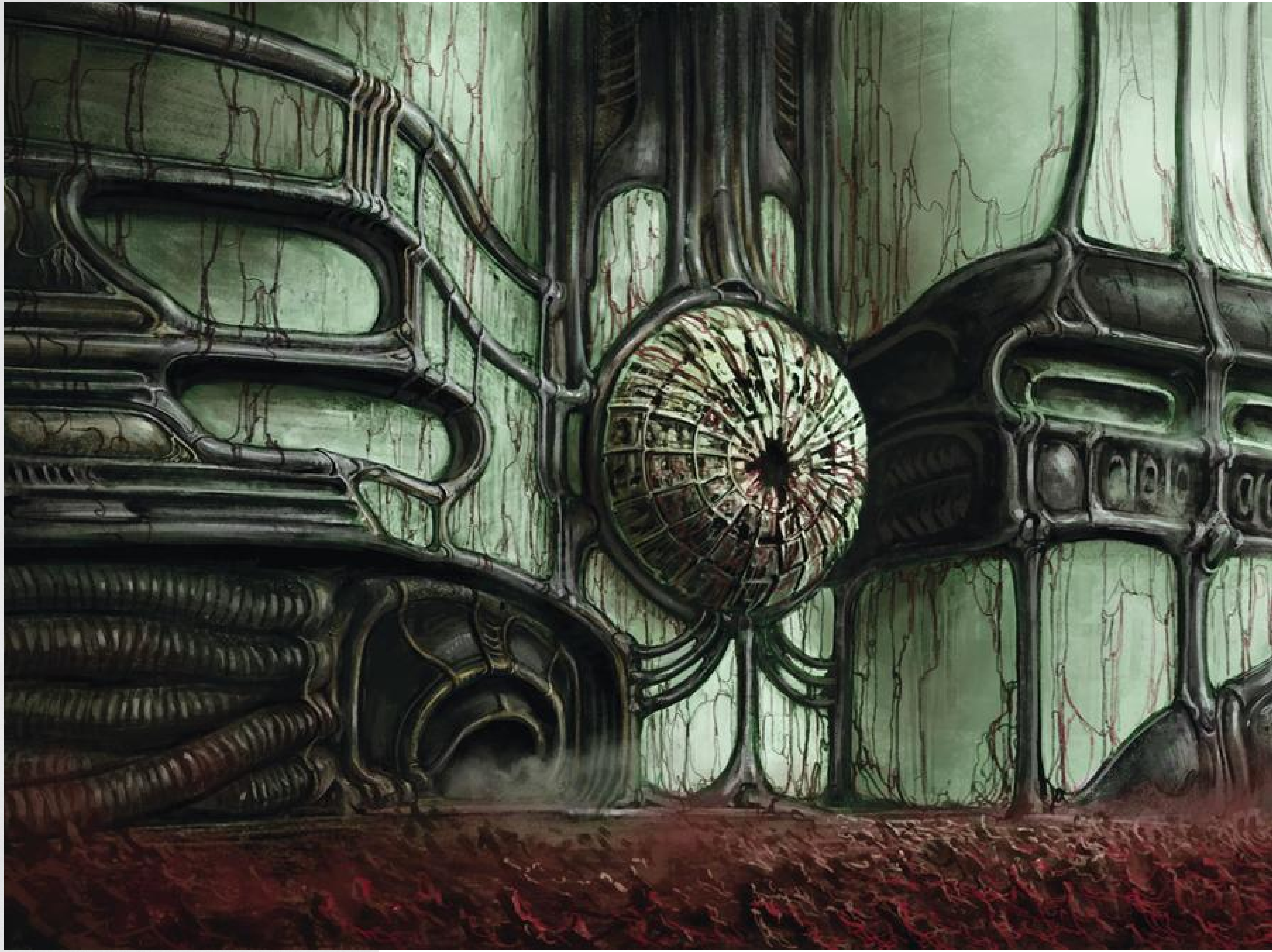


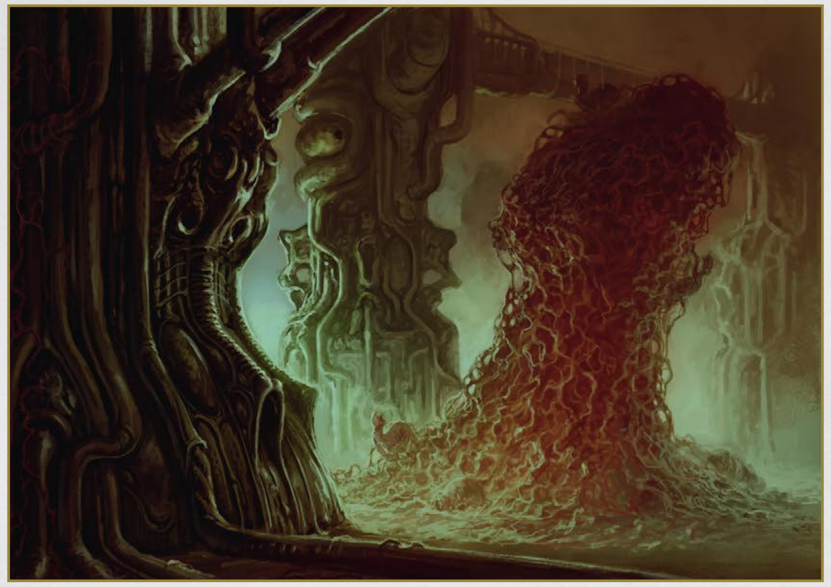


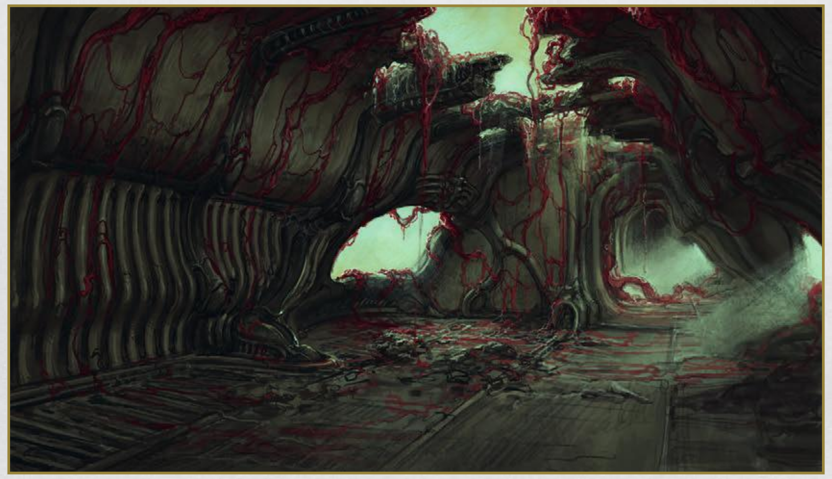


So it is that huge columns outwardly feature more mechanical and industrial components, and hard flooring acts like upturned steel cable trays to keep thick foundational cylinders of muscular cabling in check, but more biological characteristics reveal themselves as you search beneath the surface and delve into passages. Here you find inner walls that could be mistaken for racks of ribs freshly carved from giant beasts. Hallway traversals can feel like live-action gastroscopies.

RIGHT A carpet of gore lies at the base of the Crater, flanked by walls permanently tainted by aerosol string-like ropes of sinewy discharge.

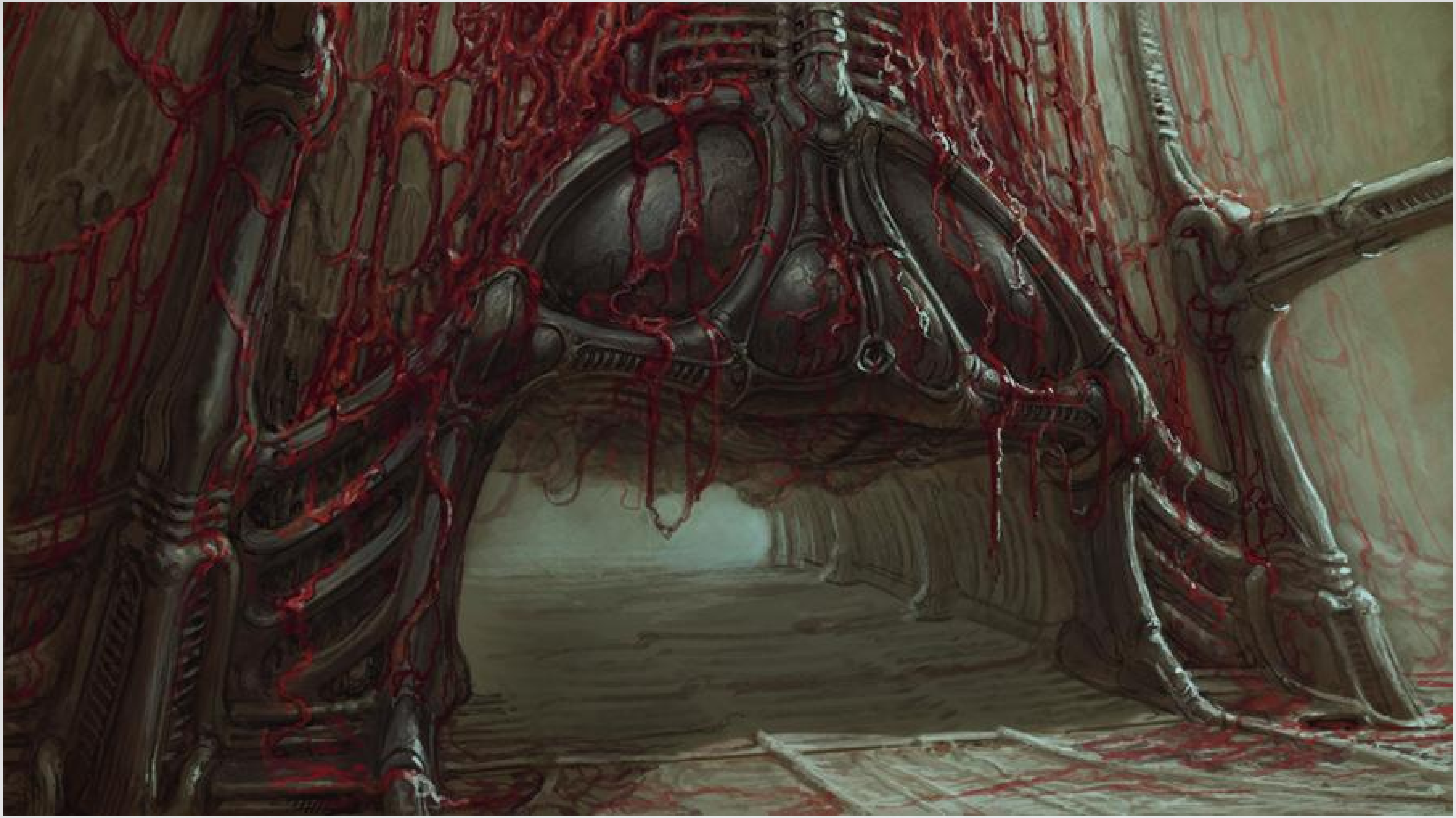




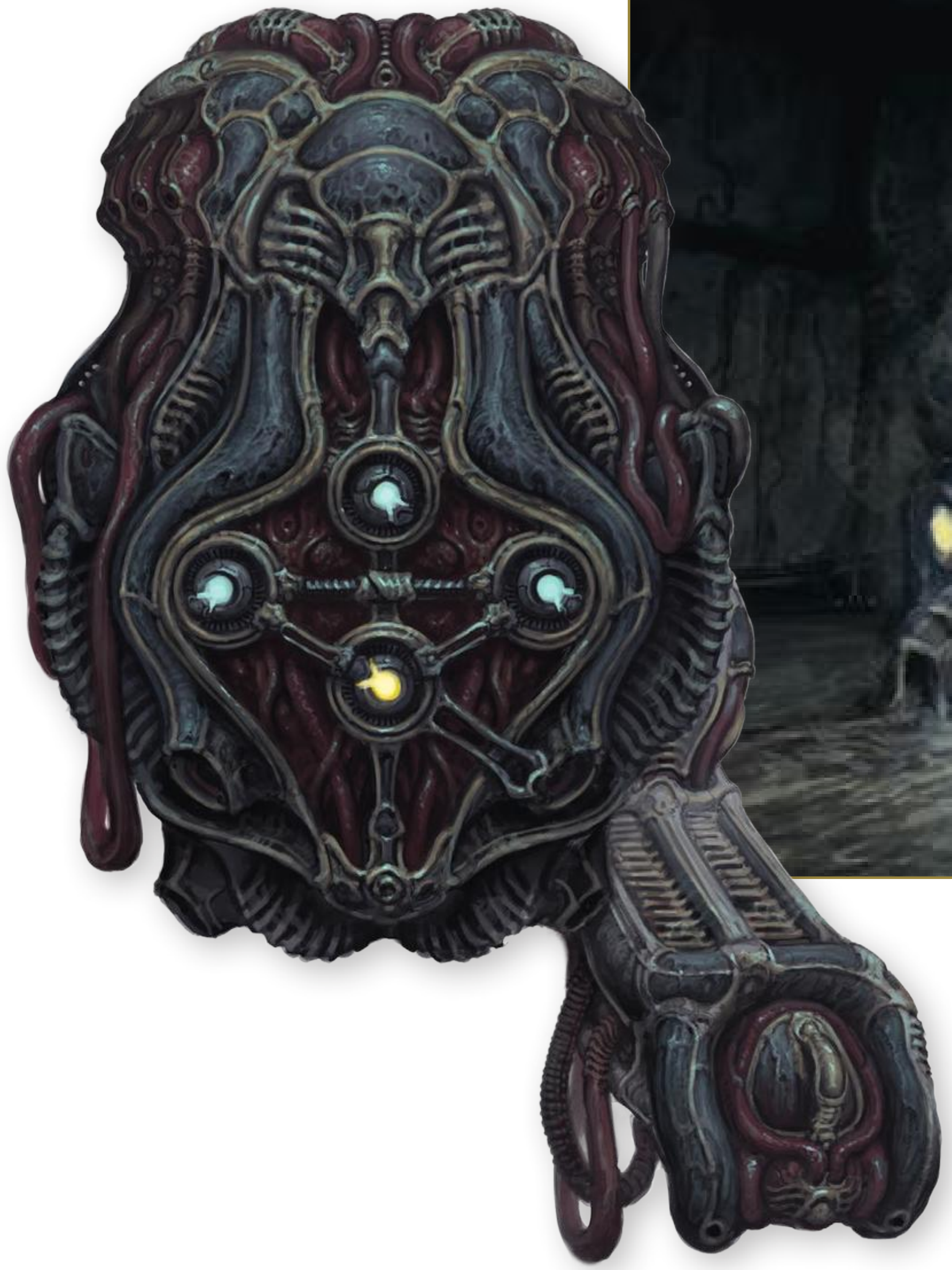


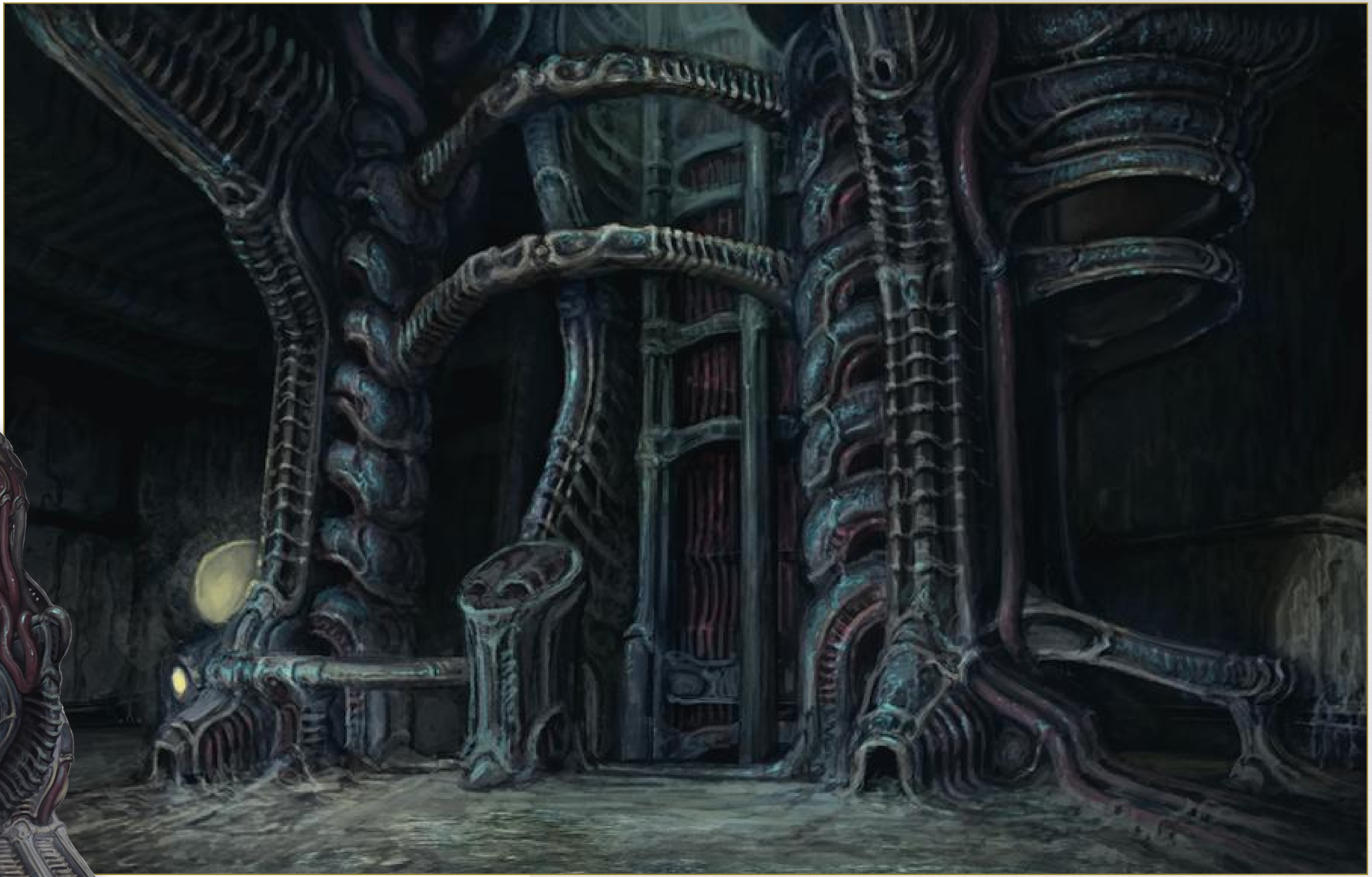
ABOVE Countless years of abrasive forces caused by the friction of Crater creatures dragging their bodies across all surfaces have eroded parts of the structure.

BELOW Wide tunnels with shallow ceilings make for claustrophobic designs, a characteristic enhanced by hanging tendrils of creature viscera that dangle at face height.



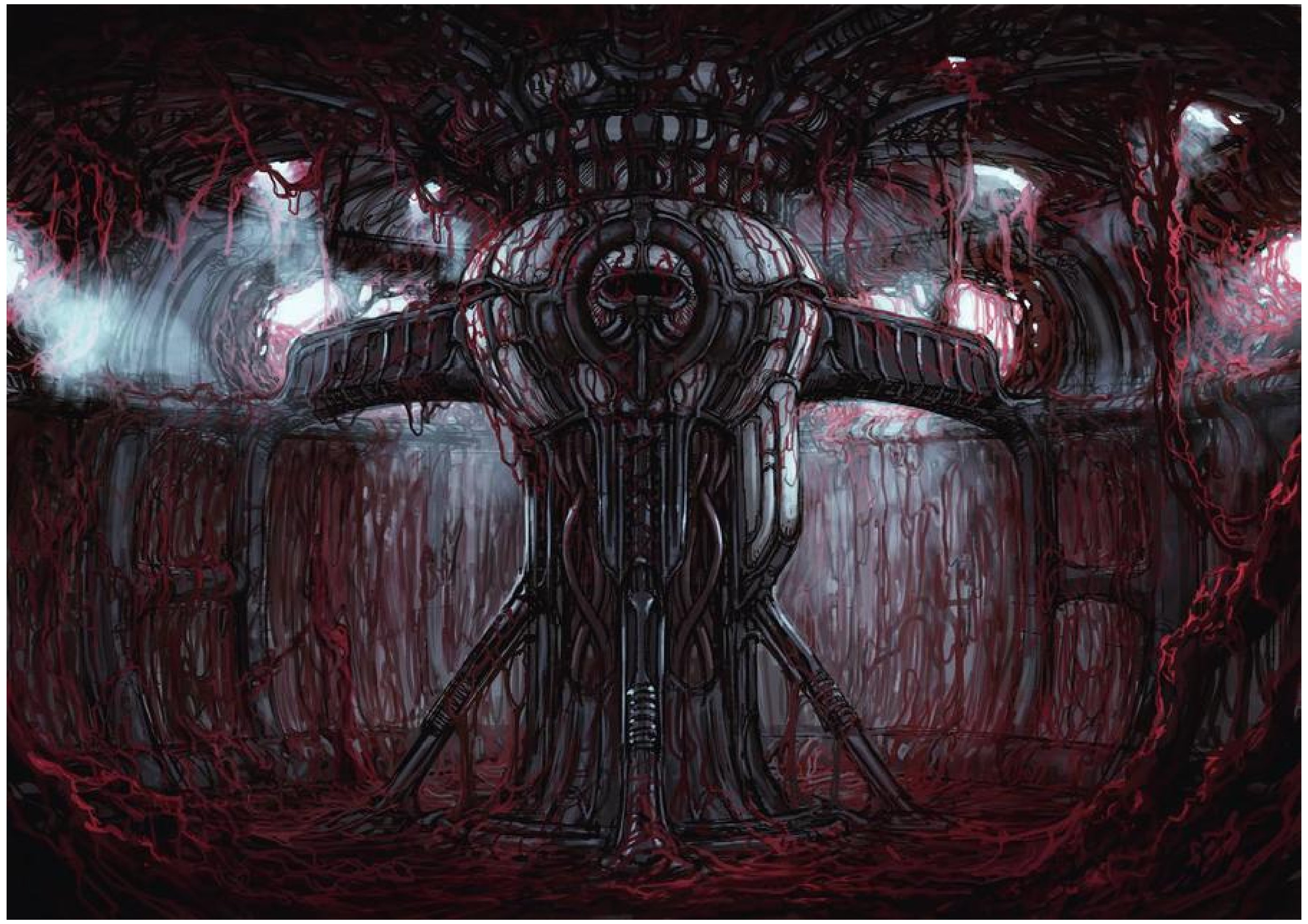
BELOW It takes many iterations to successfully build puzzle objects that naturally communicate how and why players should approach interactive elements, but simultaneously keep the overall purpose of the object and the expected outcome of the puzzle itself a mystery.



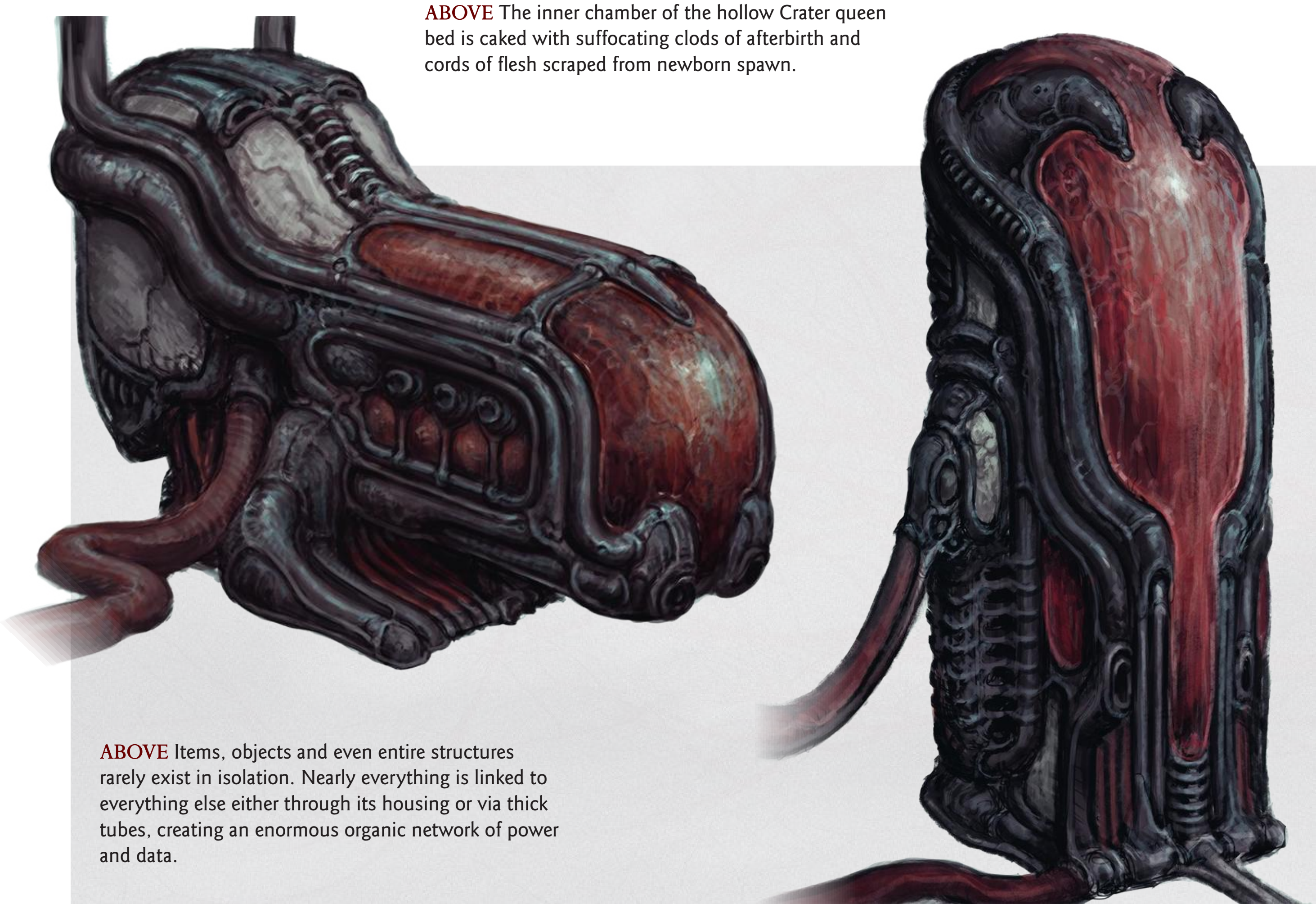


Despite this, the team avoided any explicit allusions to specific organic systems, with Acovic's concepts existing to capture mood and establish themes rather than draw direct parallels with known quantities. Game director Ljubomir Peklar explains the filtering process in place to ensure this stayed true throughout the process: "Every time I saw something too recognizable in the artwork I asked: 'Let's tone it down. Let's be more subtle.'"

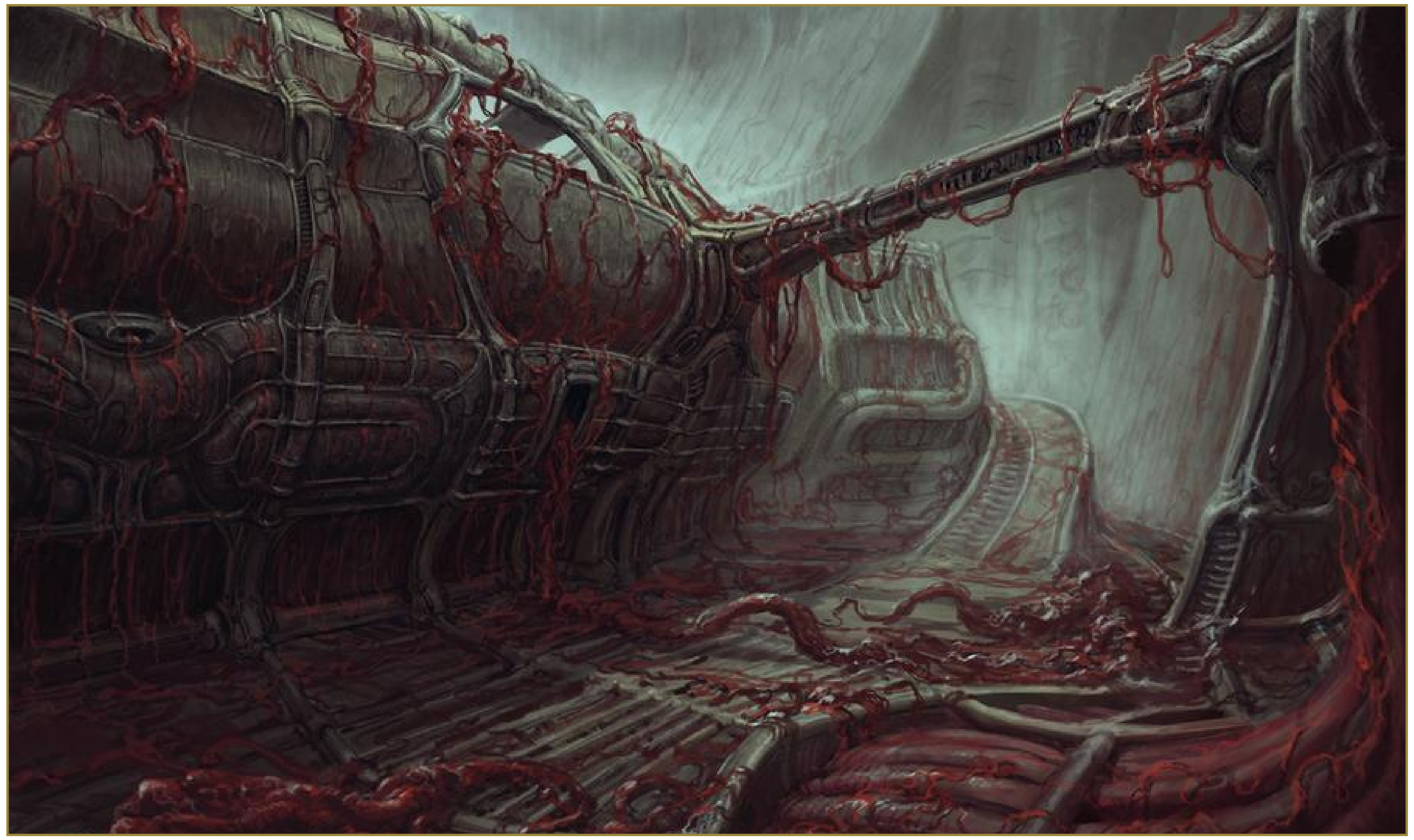
ABOVE Common features such as lift shafts are treated to subtly different visual trappings for every location. This ensures each zone feels unique; a subsequent step in a progressive lineage of technology and art from one realm to the next.



ABOVE The inner chamber of the hollow Crater queen bed is caked with suffocating clods of afterbirth and cords of flesh scraped from newborn spawn.

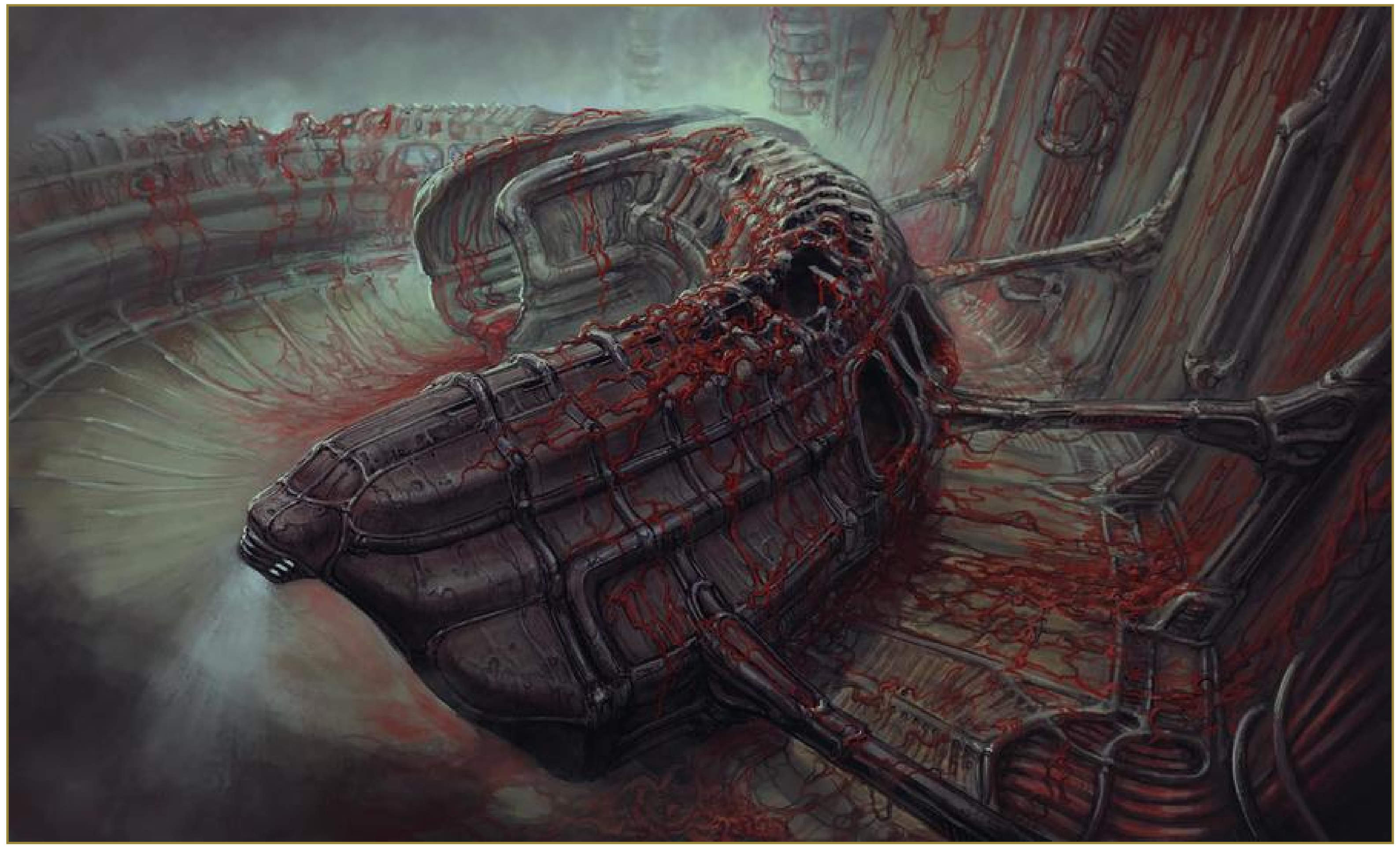


ABOVE Items, objects and even entire structures rarely exist in isolation. Nearly everything is linked to everything else either through its housing or via thick tubes, creating an enormous organic network of power and data.



ABOVE Miles upon miles of thick, thewy meat cables run beneath the flooring.

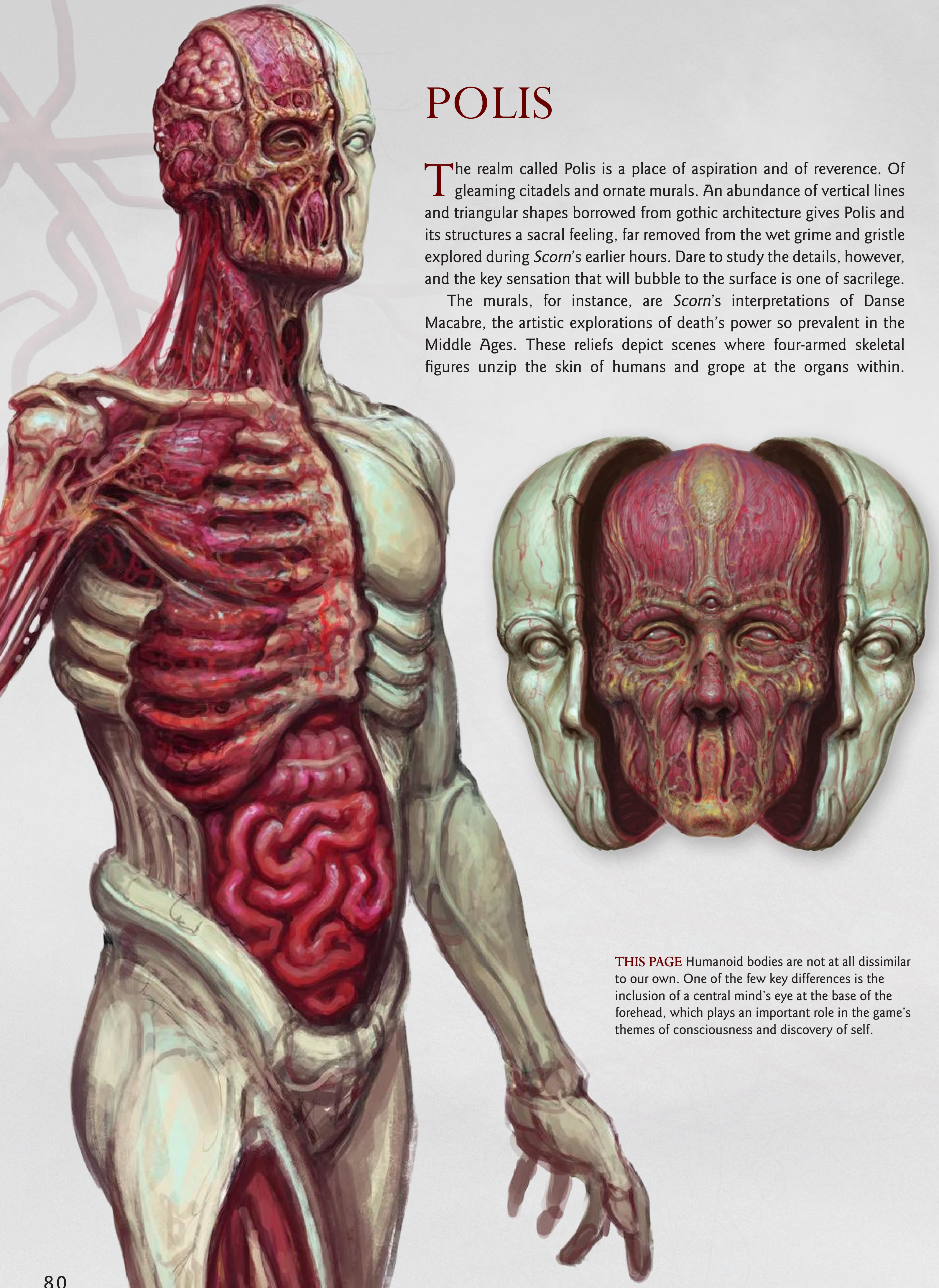
BELOW The curvature of side-tunnels ratchets up the tension by obscuring what lies ahead.



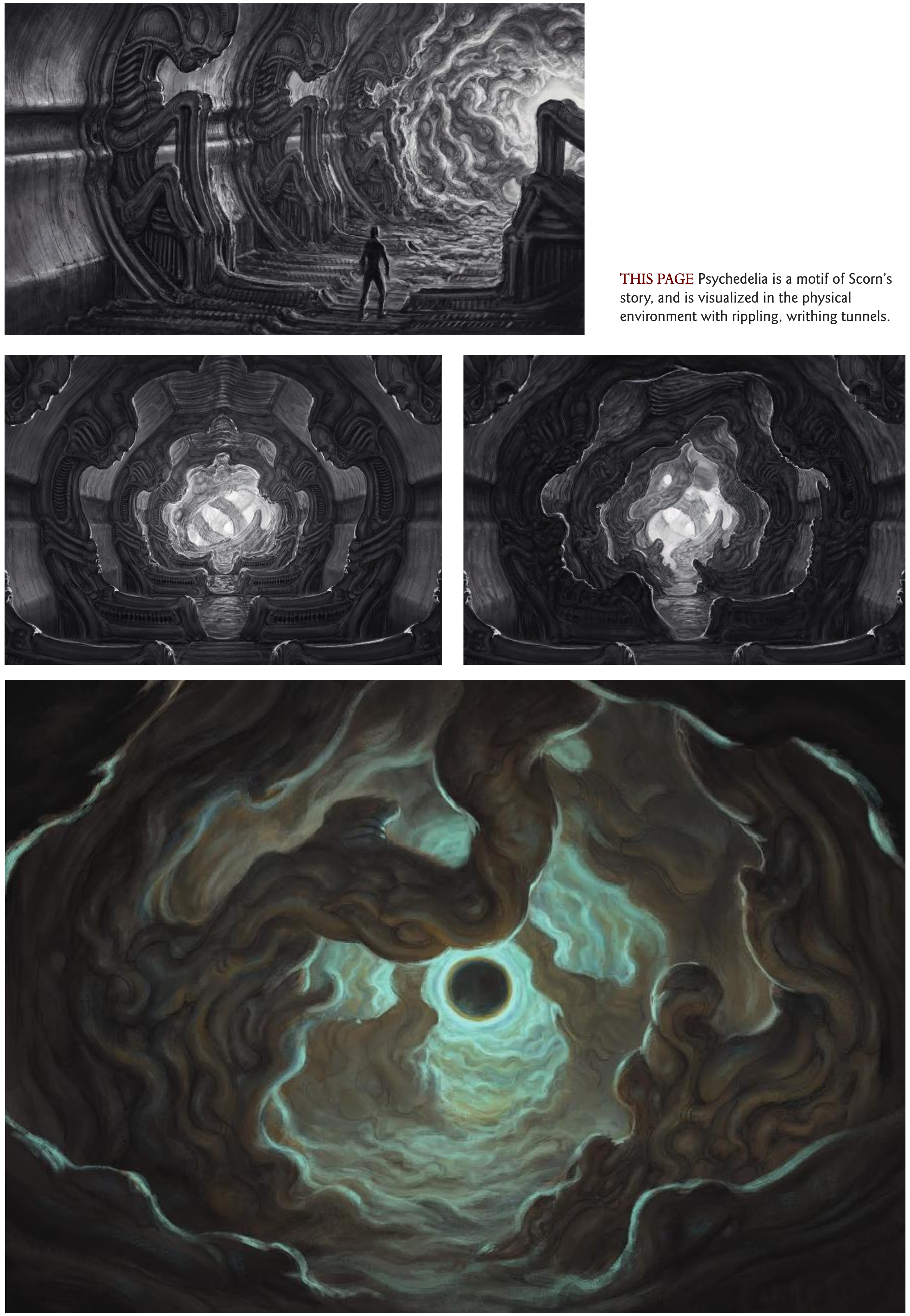
POLIS

The realm called Polis is a place of aspiration and of reverence. Of gleaming citadels and ornate murals. An abundance of vertical lines and triangular shapes borrowed from gothic architecture gives Polis and its structures a sacral feeling, far removed from the wet grime and gristle explored during *Scorn*'s earlier hours. Dare to study the details, however, and the key sensation that will bubble to the surface is one of sacrilege.

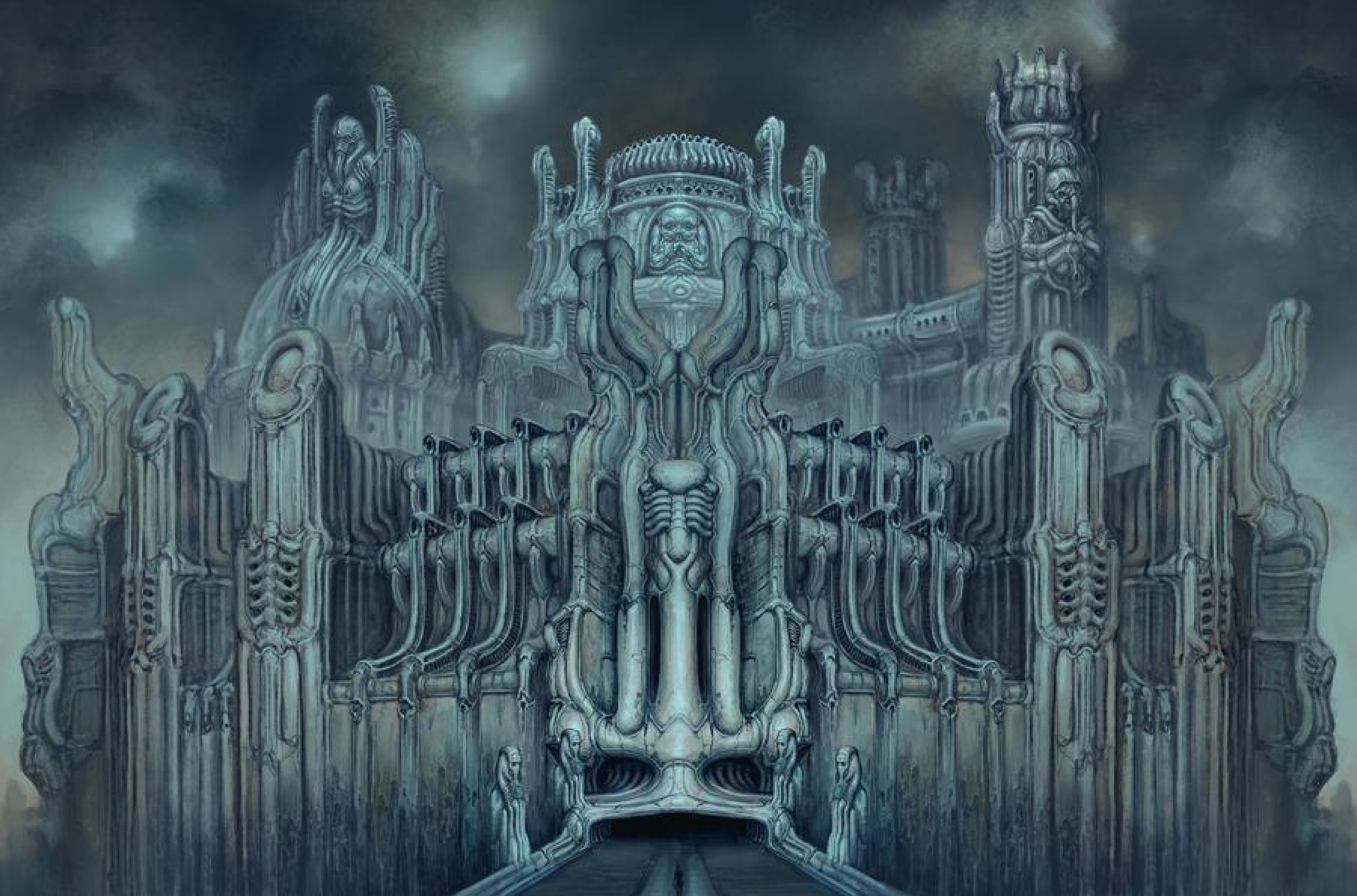
The murals, for instance, are *Scorn*'s interpretations of Danse Macabre, the artistic explorations of death's power so prevalent in the Middle Ages. These reliefs depict scenes where four-armed skeletal figures unzip the skin of humans and grope at the organs within.

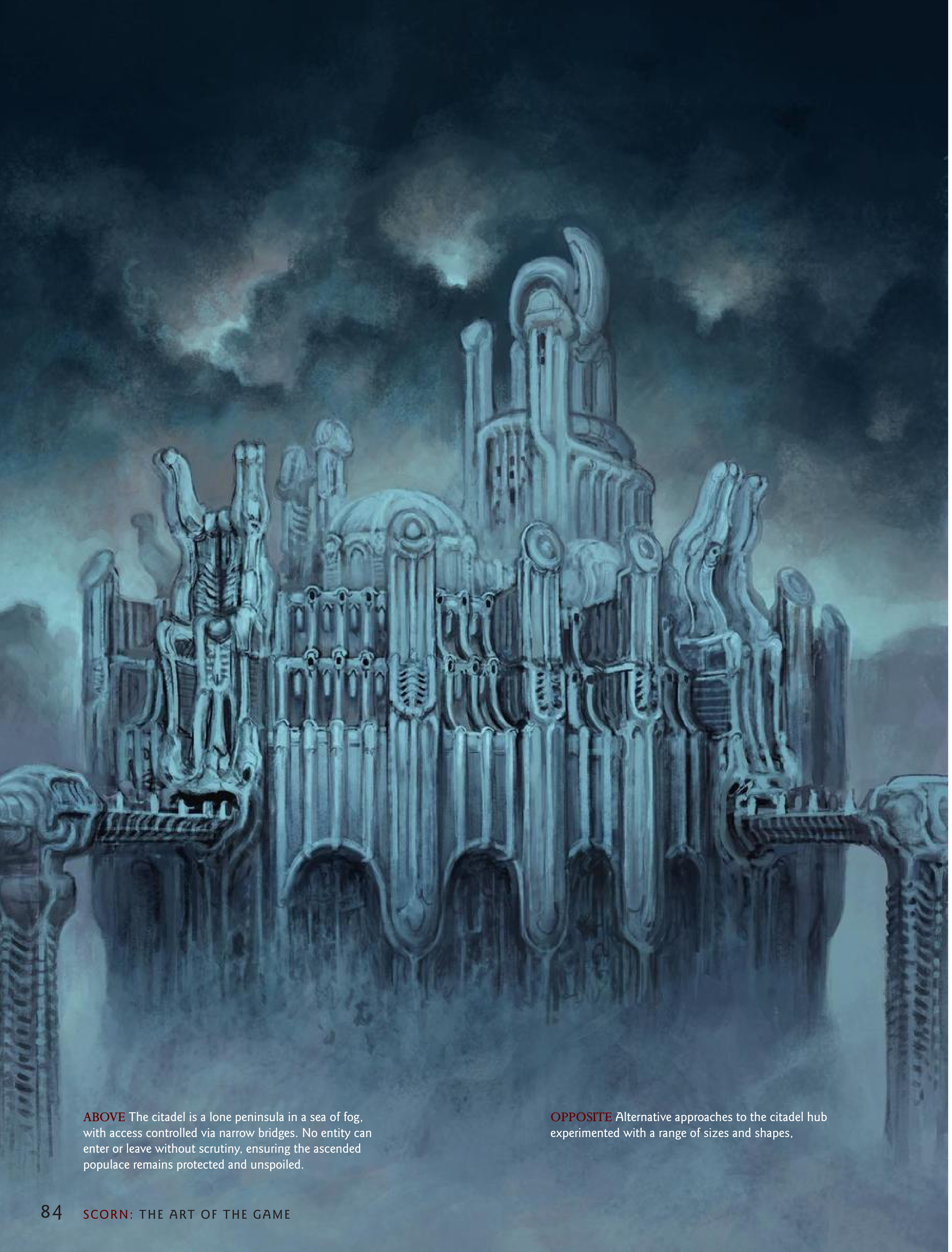


THIS PAGE Humanoid bodies are not at all dissimilar to our own. One of the few key differences is the inclusion of a central mind's eye at the base of the forehead, which plays an important role in the game's themes of consciousness and discovery of self.



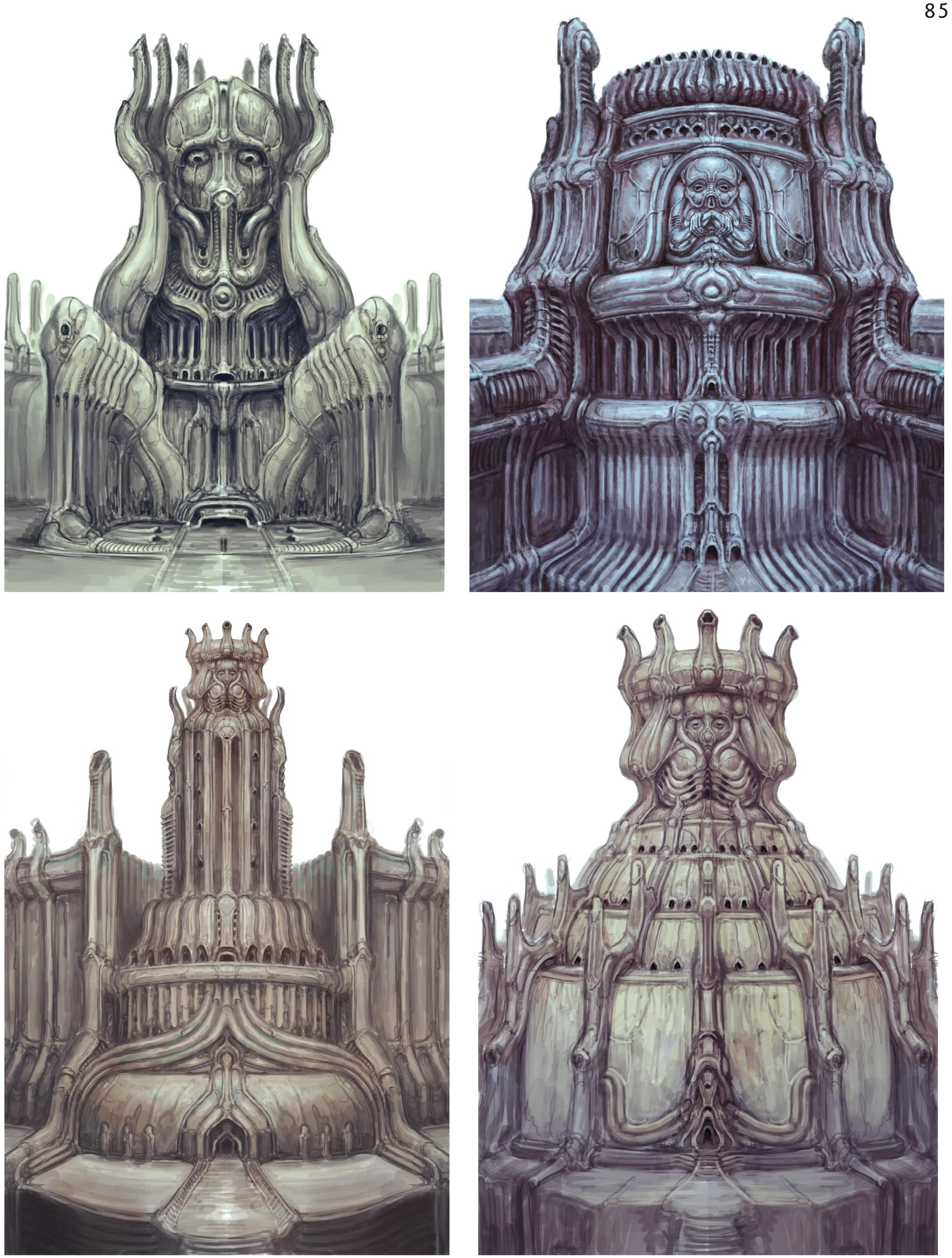
THIS PAGE Psychedelia is a motif of Scorn's story, and is visualized in the physical environment with rippling, writhing tunnels.

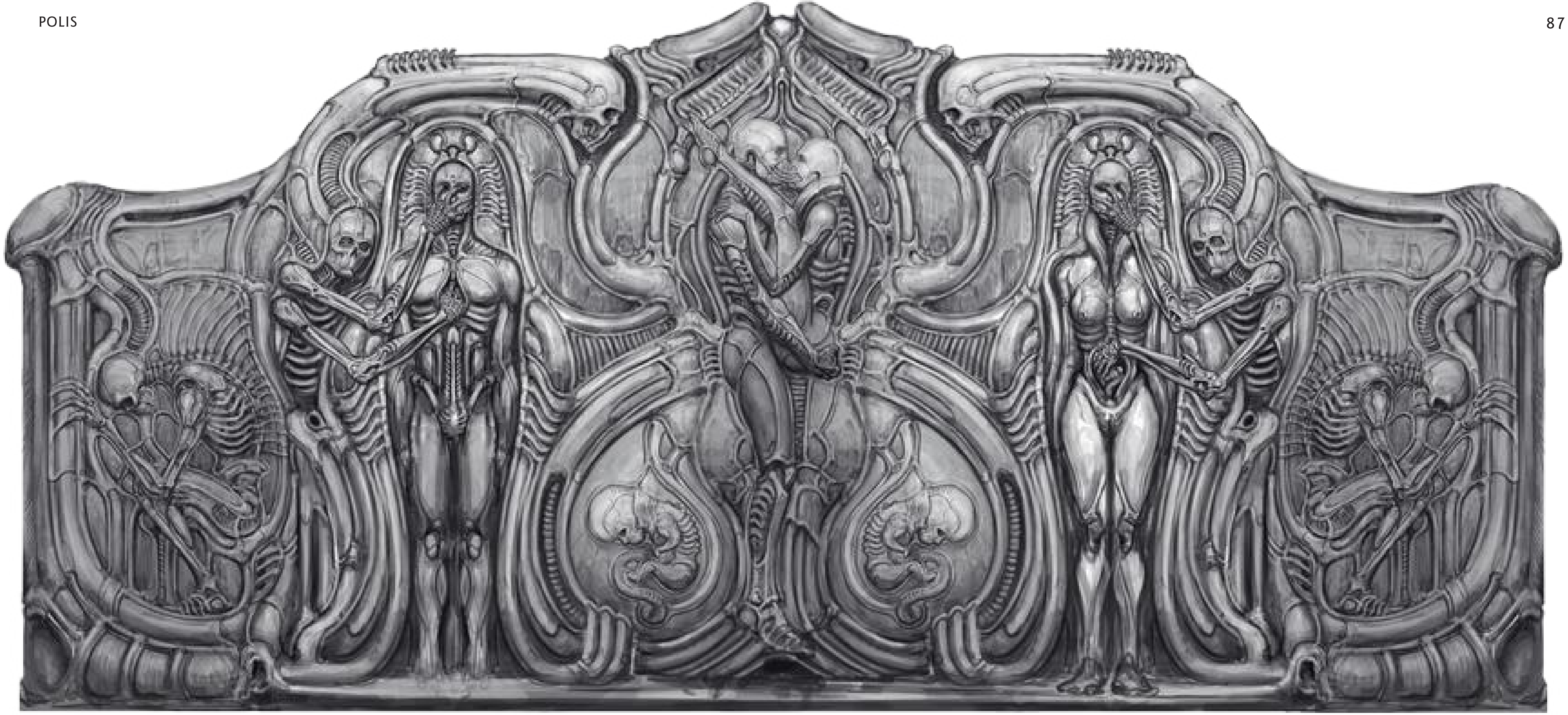




ABOVE The citadel is a lone peninsula in a sea of fog, with access controlled via narrow bridges. No entity can enter or leave without scrutiny, ensuring the ascended populace remains protected and unspoiled.

OPPOSITE Alternative approaches to the citadel hub experimented with a range of sizes and shapes.





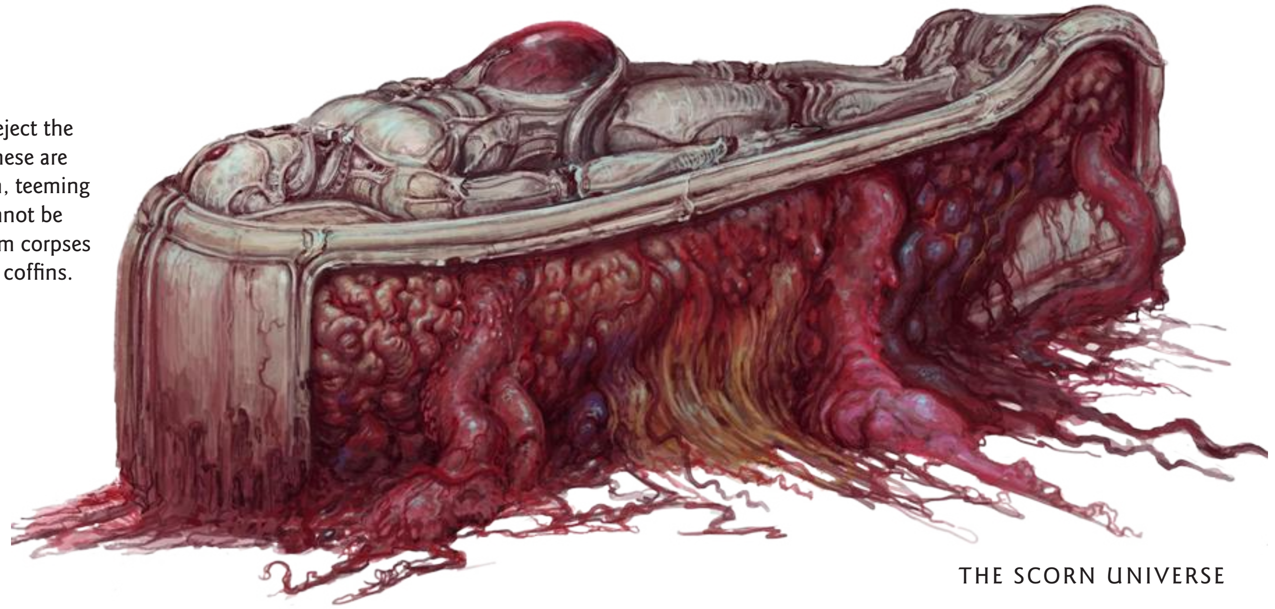
Mutilated bodies lay splayed open mid-vivisection, while other characters are gagged or outright impaled by tubing and pipework.

There's an abundance of sex depicted too, and not just confined to the murals themselves. This location is overflowing with decorative sculptures of copulating corpses posed in different positions, their bodies clearly in states of decomposition as they engage in a range of sexual activities. Game director Ljubomir Peklar attributes their inclusion to the work of Sigmund Freud, and in particular his exploration of the intersection of life and death drives in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920)*.

"That's Eros and Thanatos," says Peklar of the prevalence of the explicit statues, referring to the ancient Greek God of Love (Eros) and the ancient Greek God of Death (Thanatos). "That's a Freudian idea, expressed in a literal way. That dynamic between death and sex, the death drive and the sex drive, the whole civilization is based on that dichotomy.

ABOVE Visible on either side of the tableau's central focus on reproduction, parasite-controlled figures rake at the faces and internal organs of humanoids.

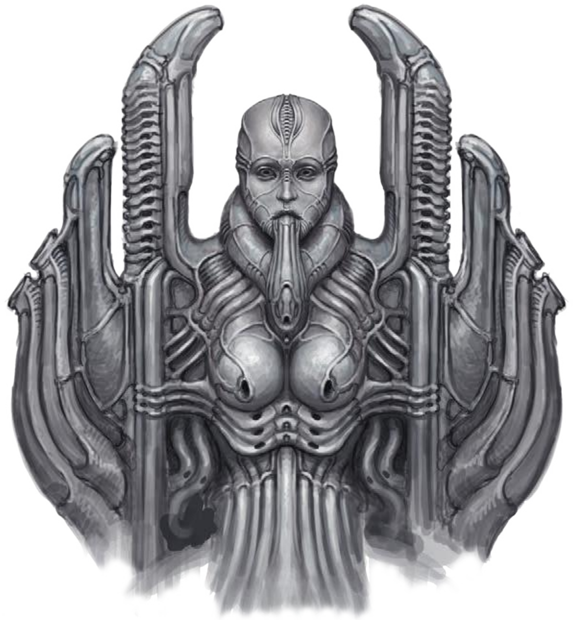
RIGHT Scorn's sarcophaguses reject the idea of death. These are vessels of rebirth, teeming with life that cannot be extinguished from corpses or imprisoned in coffins.

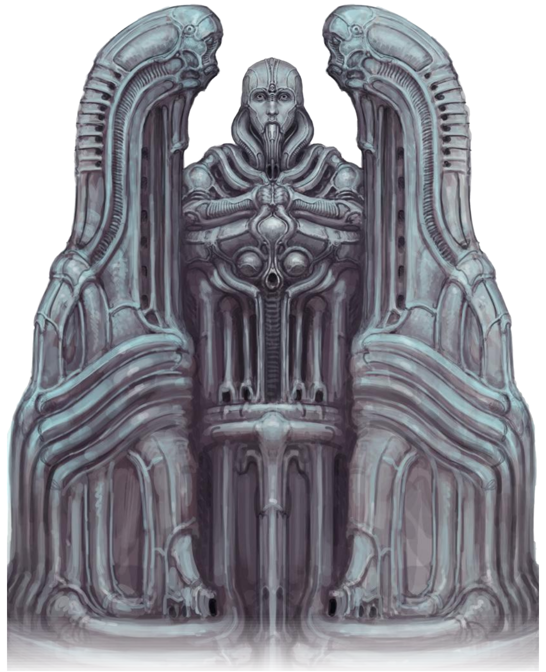


They don't have the same standards as empiricists, they try to figure things out through other means."

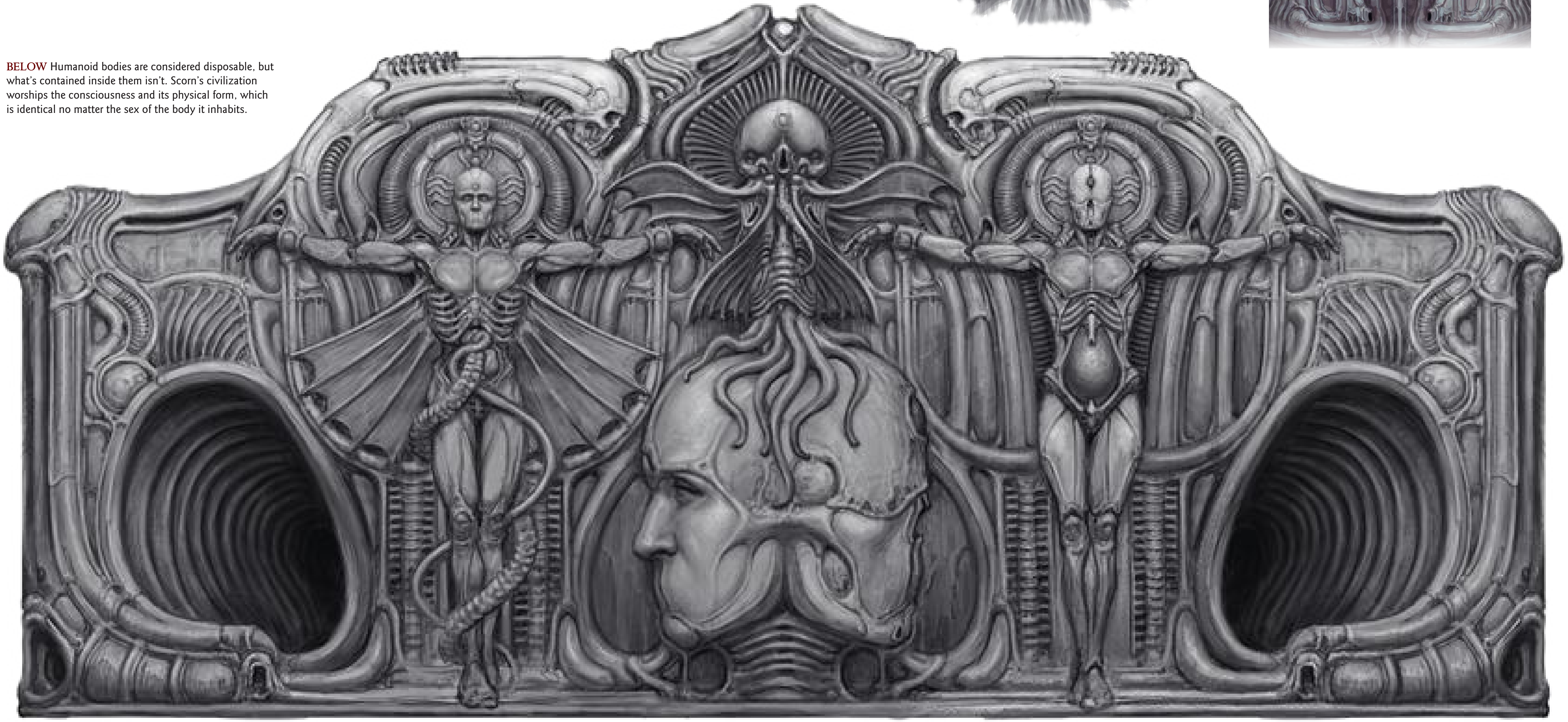
For Ebb Software, these are all ingredients employed to make the player feel unease without resorting to gore or blood. They're not the only tricks used in this fashion. Sketches of shadowy walkways located far beneath the gleaming citadel's heights achieve this same goal with a different approach: confusing tangles of kinked passages with frequent elevation changes, jumbled together to make for journeys as daunting as possible. There's more than a hint of the impossible staircase from M. C. Escher's "Relativity" in these designs.

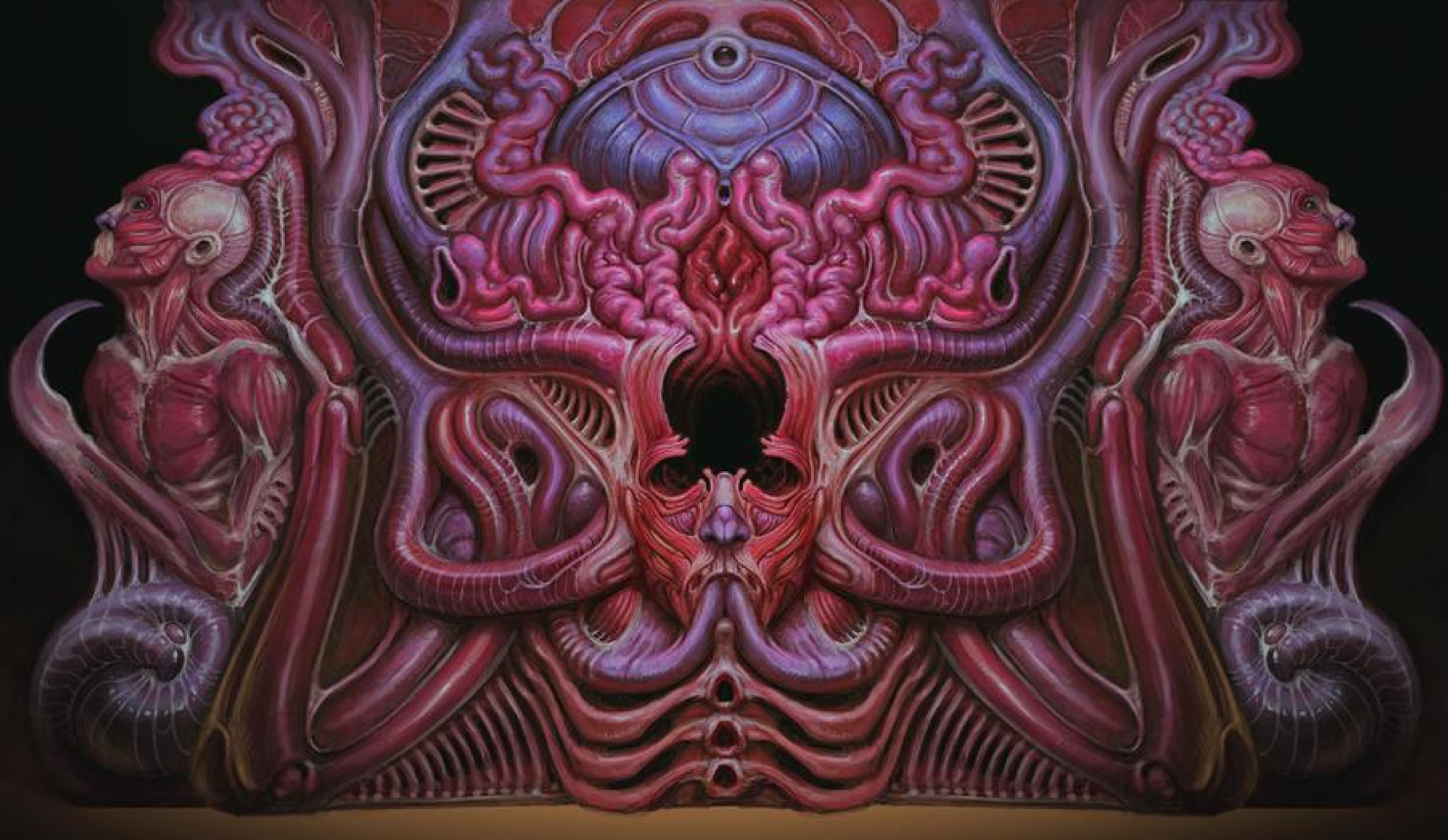
OPPOSITE Male and female effigies are further distinguished by flanking details. Wing-like tubes give females seraph qualities.





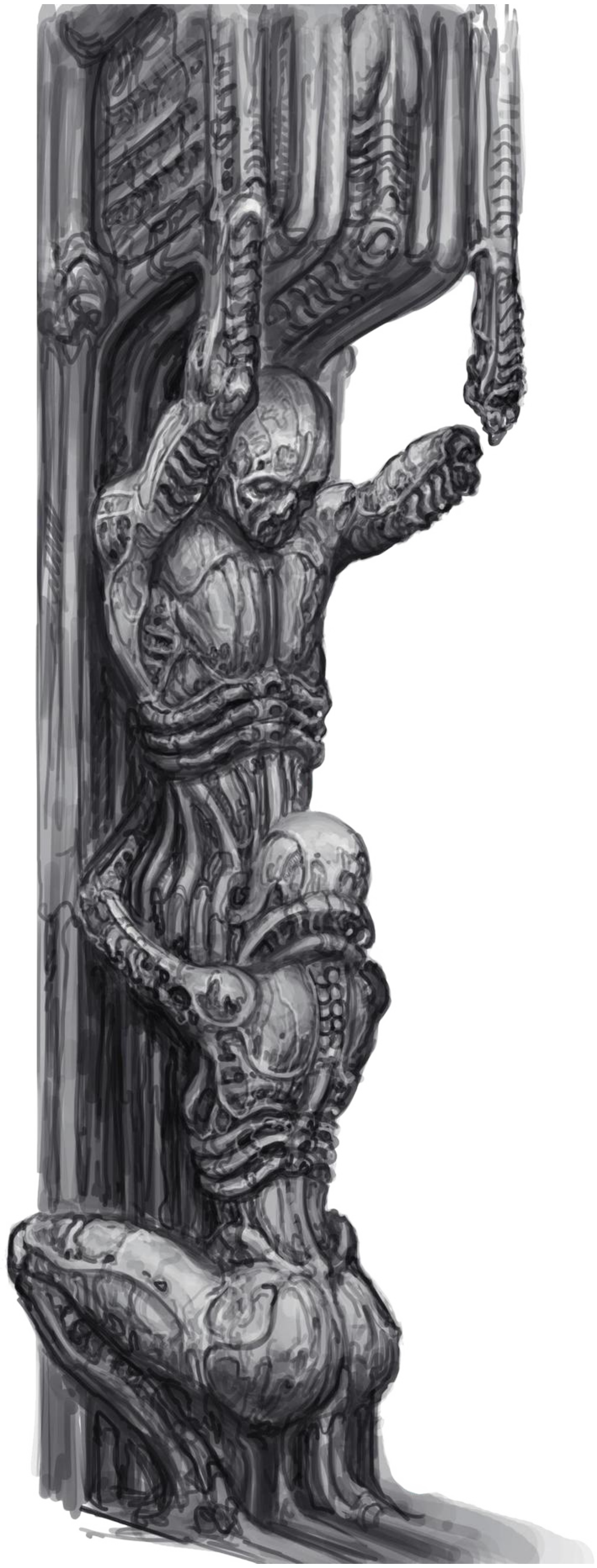
BELOW Humanoid bodies are considered disposable, but what's contained inside them isn't. Scorn's civilization worships the consciousness and its physical form, which is identical no matter the sex of the body it inhabits.



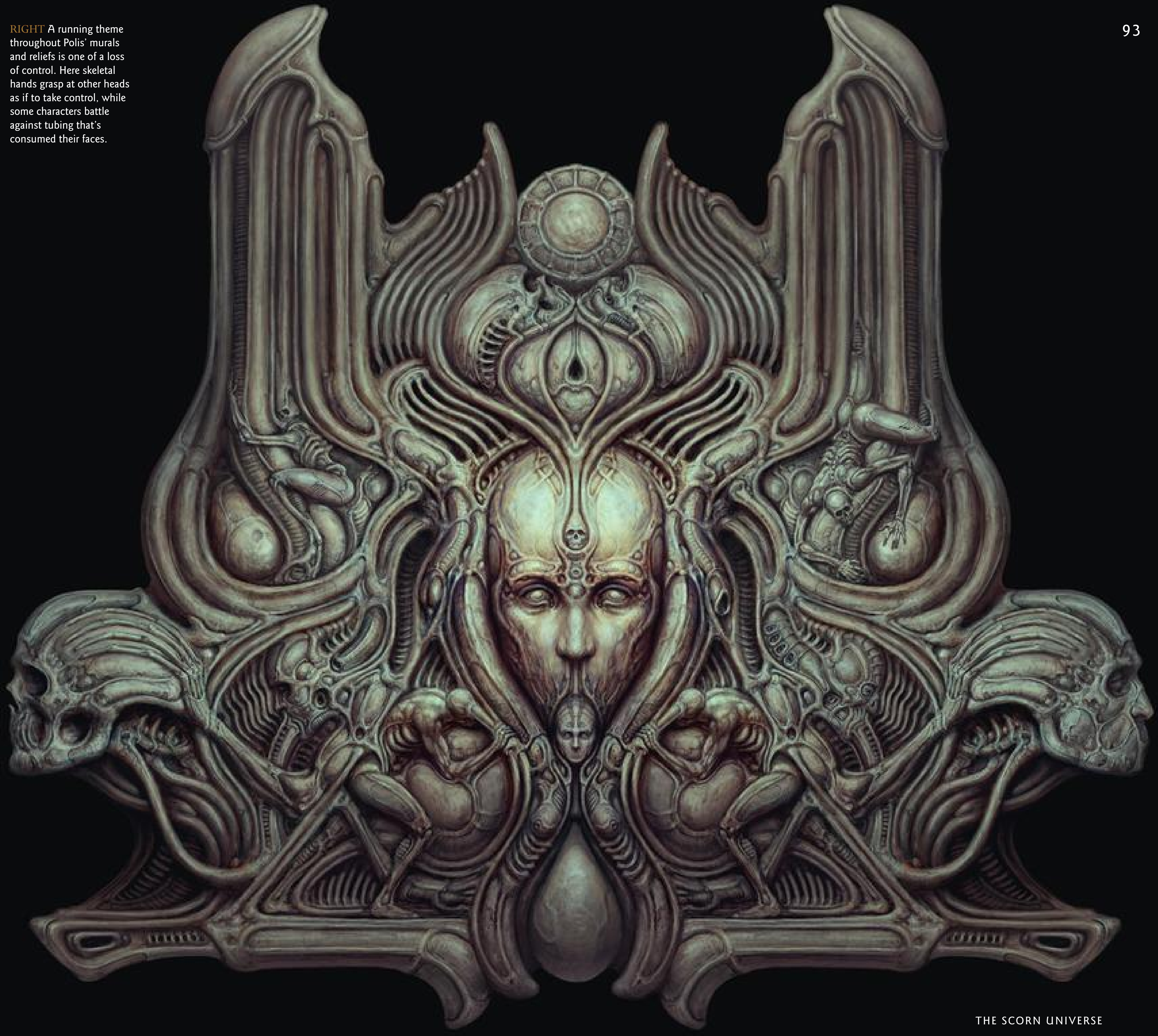


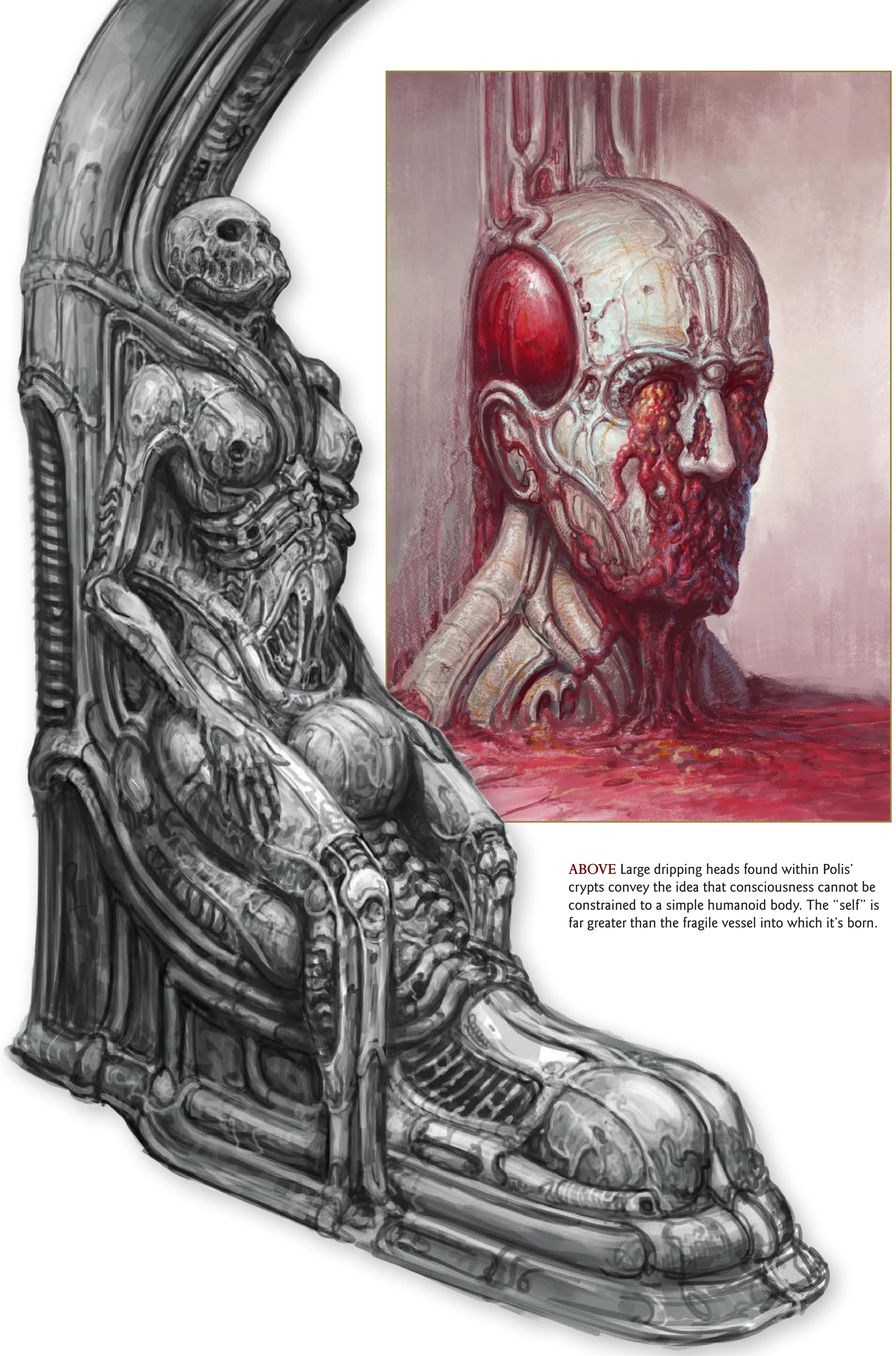
ABOVE Filip Acovic drew this fleshy mural to complement Polis' hard-surface versions. The mural's composition contains hints of the preserved corpses from Gunther von Hagens' famous Körperwelten / Body Worlds exhibition, which wasn't used as a direct reference point but remains a body of work greatly admired by Acovic. "I've looked at it many times," he says. "Not while I was drawing this, but it exists in the back of my mind."

BELOW The Freudian ideas of sex and death and the intersection of the two played a big role in the theming of Polis.



RIGHT A running theme throughout Polis' murals and reliefs is one of a loss of control. Here skeletal hands grasp at other heads as if to take control, while some characters battle against tubing that's consumed their faces.

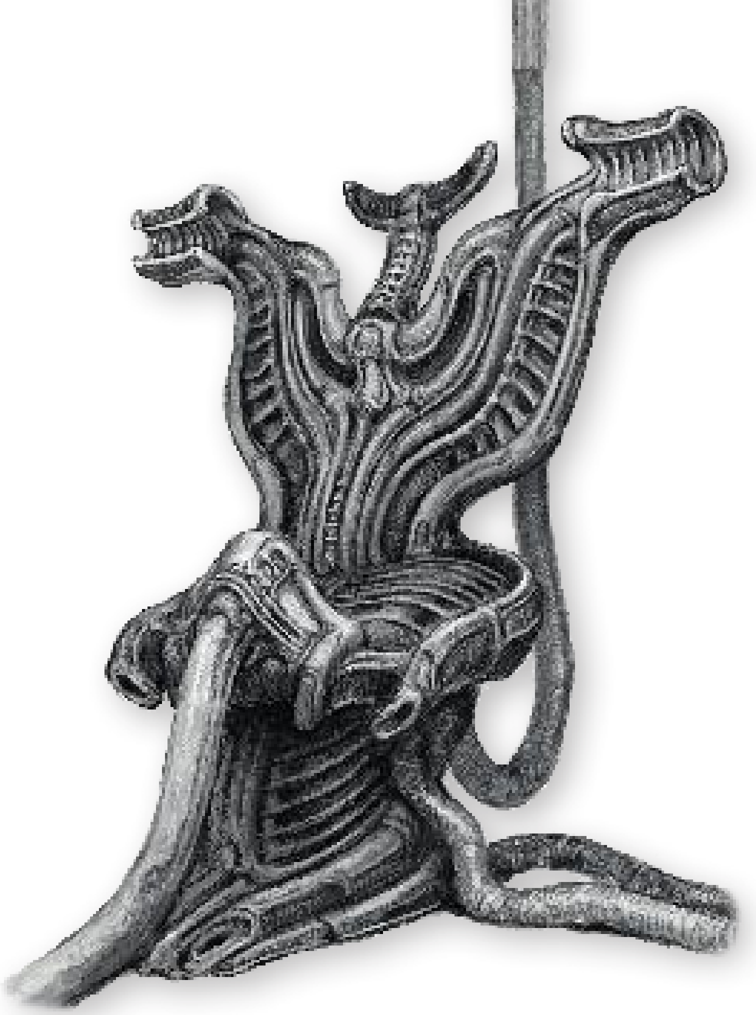




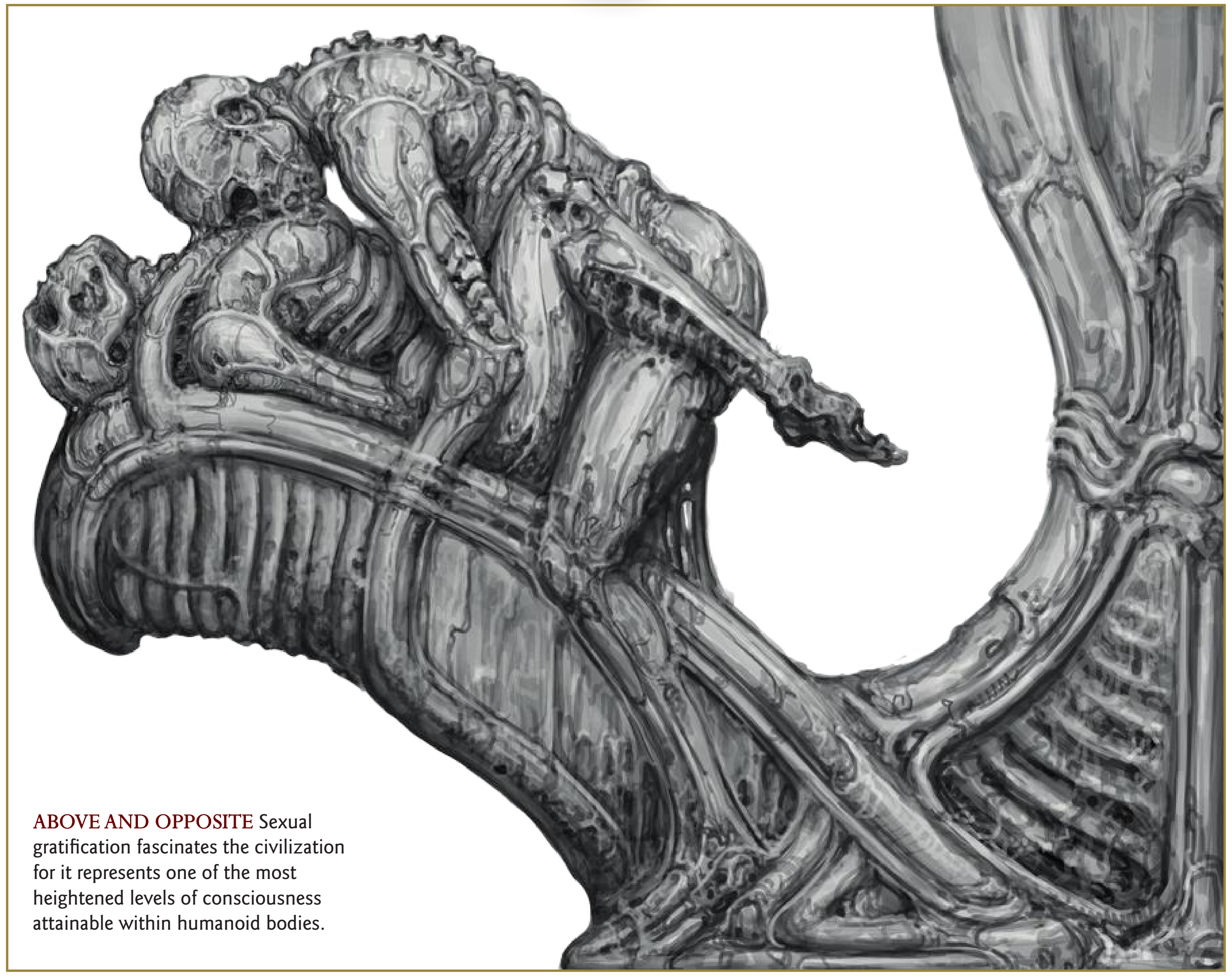
ABOVE Large dripping heads found within Polis' crypts convey the idea that consciousness cannot be constrained to a simple humanoid body. The "self" is far greater than the fragile vessel into which it's born.

Odd geometries extend to other features, such as chairs that closely resemble torture racks, or windows designed to look like natural foramens. Most unsettling of all are concept artist Filip Acovic's different treatments of the corridors stretching towards a nexus event. They're intimidating enough in isolation, with overhanging sculptures flanking the walls like haunched predators waiting to pounce on unsuspecting prey, but peer deeper into the corridor and the structural integrity becomes unmoored as Euclidean geometry bleeds into alien-like spaces.

"You should have this sense of reality warping around you," says Acovic, leaning into the location's spiritual and psychedelic undercurrents. "As you move down the corridor everything changes, becoming formless."



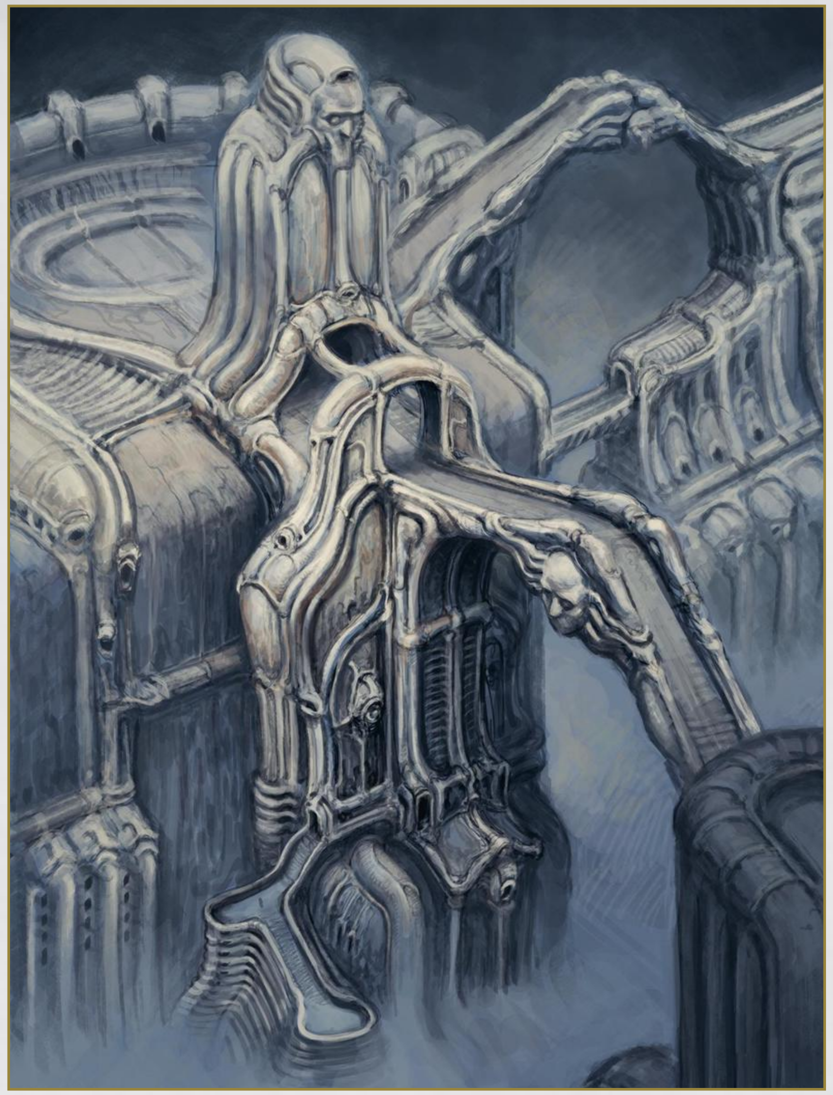
RIGHT Part chair, part operation table, cyborgs are pieced together on this device.



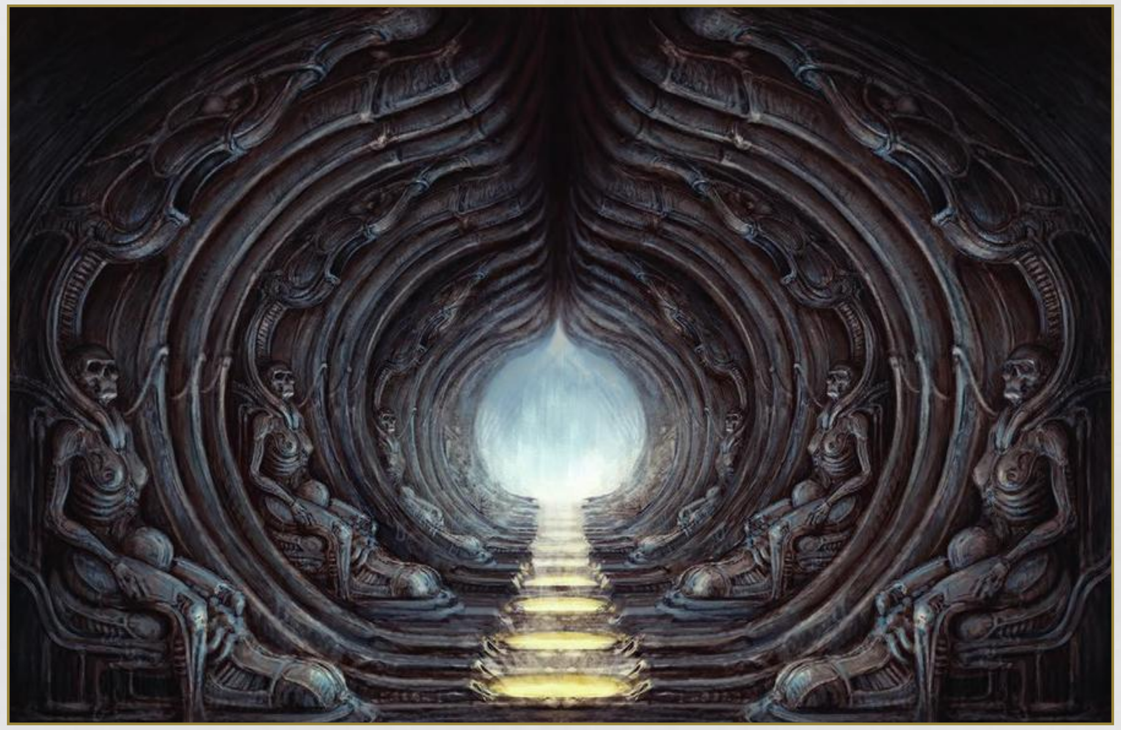
ABOVE AND OPPOSITE Sexual gratification fascinates the civilization for it represents one of the most heightened levels of consciousness attainable within humanoid bodies.

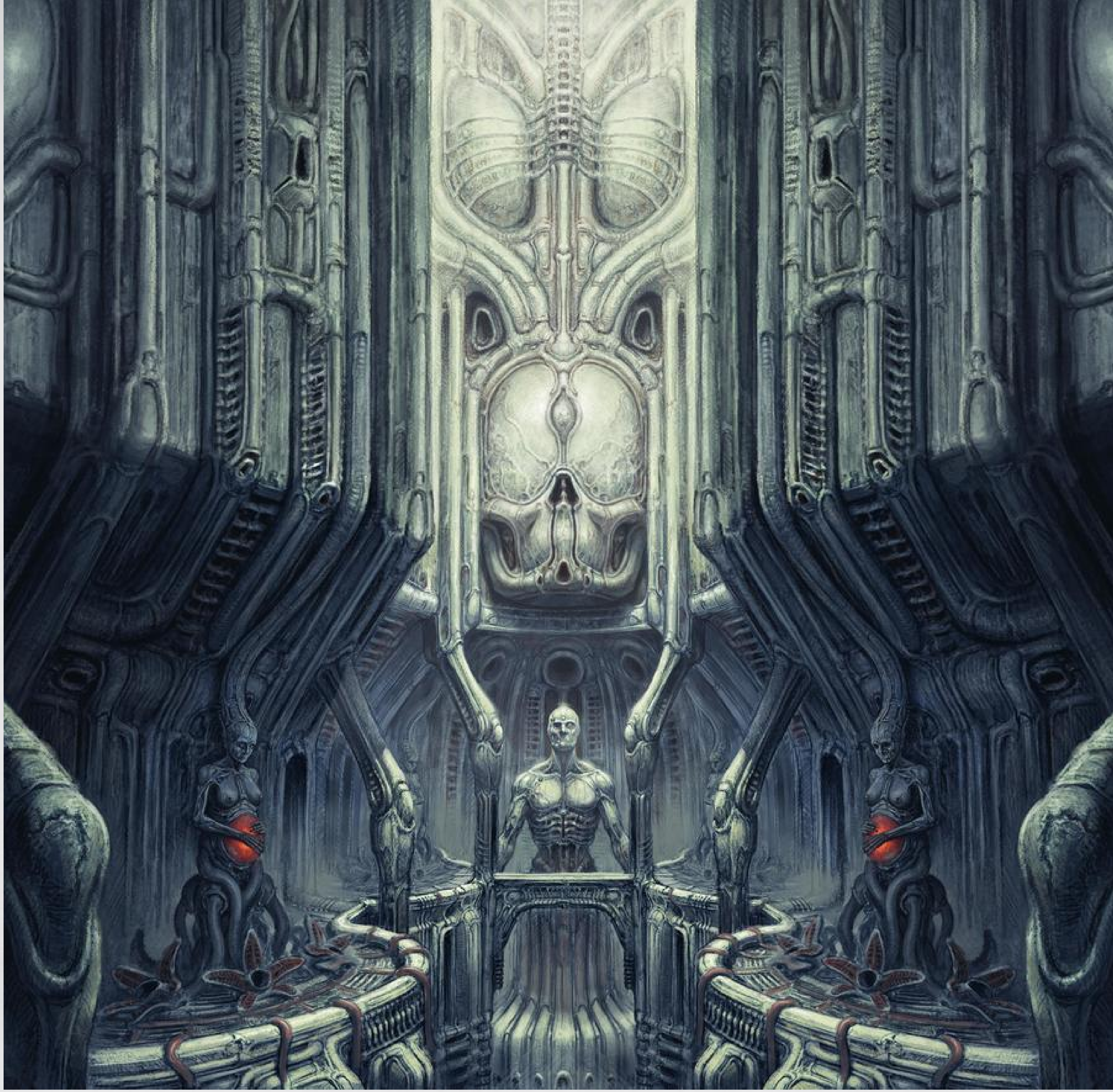
OPPOSITE The combination of symmetry, triangular supporting lines and vertical design contribute to Polis' sacred themes: links many players will instinctively understand based on their own cultural backgrounds.

RIGHT Bone-white aesthetics are strong contrasts to the shadowy locations previously explored.



BELOW The pilgrimage towards holy light past curving pillars and explicit statues feels like walking through a twisted church nave.





THE BLASTED LABYRINTH

All stories of video game development come with tales of feature casualties. Of levels and ideas that ended up discarded either during the concept phase or deeper into development and testing. As much as *Scorn* defies comparison in many ways, it's no different from other games when it comes to this universal truth.

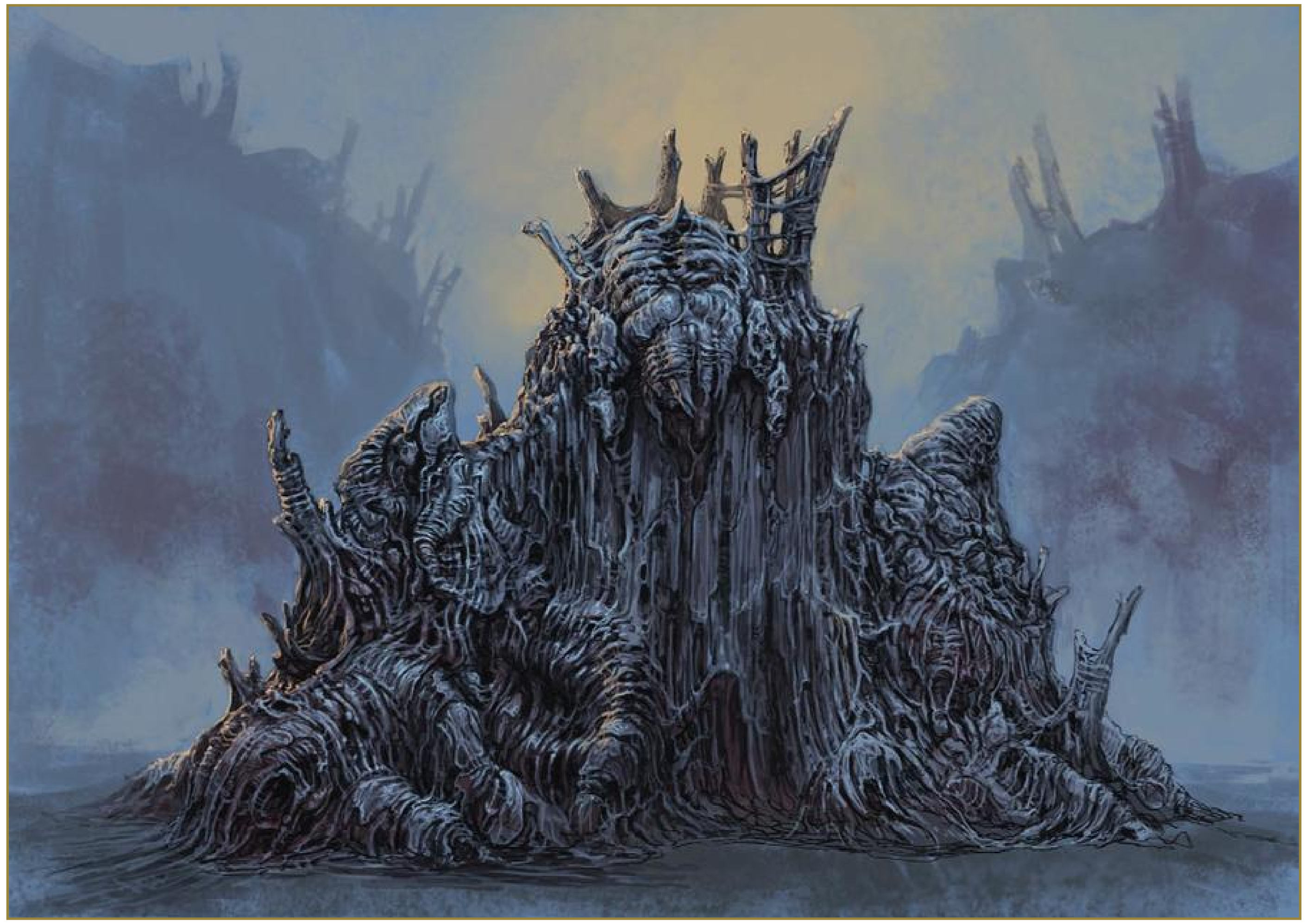
The Blasted Labyrinth is one such example of a feature both concepted and fleshed out before development was focused elsewhere. Originally conceived to be a transitional area between the Crater and the Tower, a second unused area you'll discover in just a few pages, it's a location brimming with its own lore.

Earlier on in *Scorn*'s development the short homunculi creatures (see p130) had a bigger role within the world. The diminutive engineers yearned for power beyond their station, and dreamed of taking over Polis. But ambition breeds greed and conflict, and the army was split into two opposing factions who waged war against one another in that quest for dominance. One faction toiled away repurposing dead bodies to make armored cyborgs. The other focused its energies into building militarized robotic exosuits. And, inevitably, they clashed, with uncountable losses suffered on both sides.

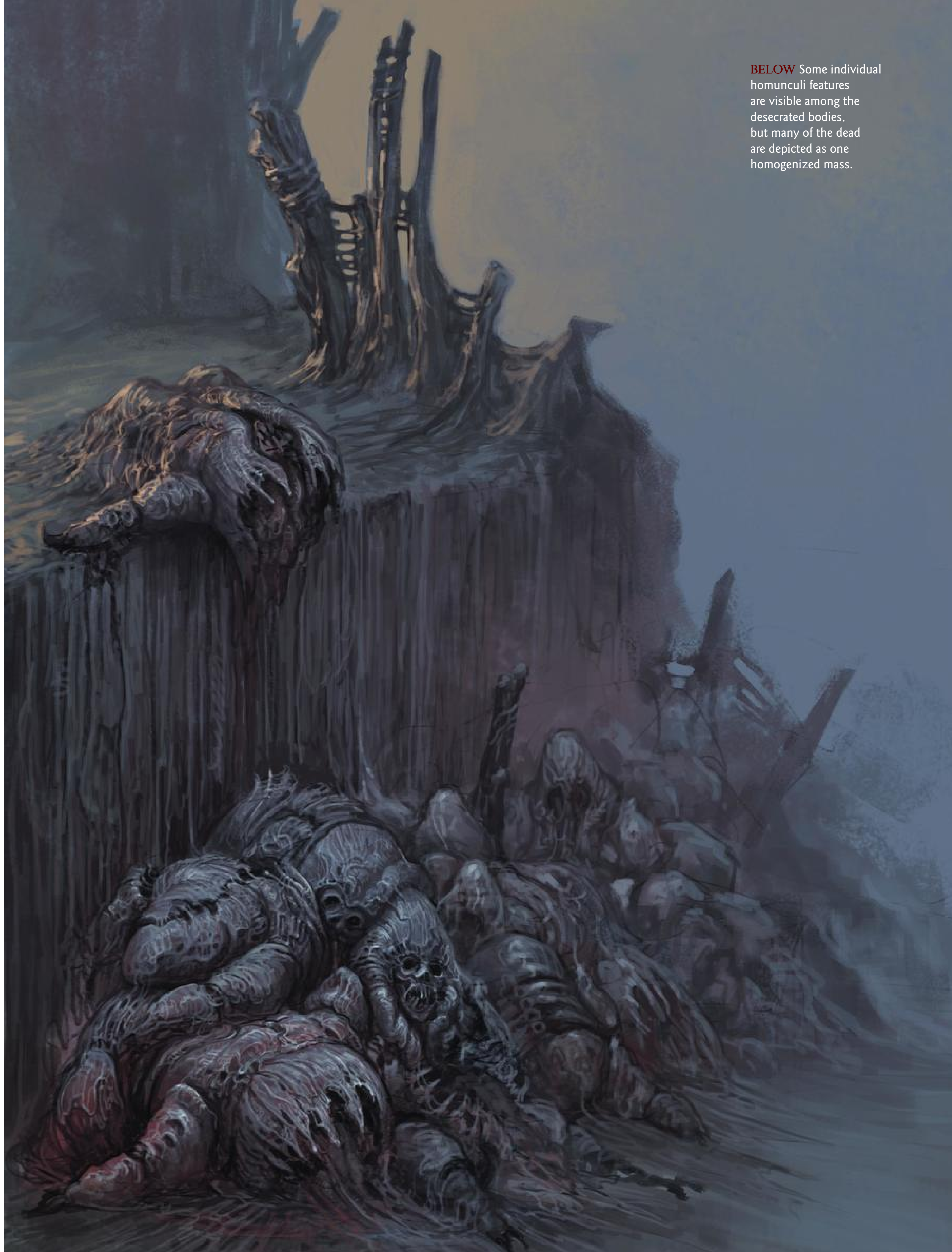
"The labyrinth was basically the battleground of these homunculi," says concept artist Filip Acovic. "And you, as the player, would just get in the middle," adds game director Ljubomir Peklar.

Acovic likens the battles to those of World War I, with relentless treadmills of fighters sent forward to inevitable doom. The winding tunnels of the labyrinth acted like deep trenches, too vast to scale. Impenetrable walls and decaying, blast-rocked and weather-beaten buildings—"something really destructive happened here," says Peklar, though he himself doesn't necessarily know precisely what that "something" was—funneled the armies around blind corners and into inescapable killing corridors.

BELOW Heaps of rotting bodies point to a war that's been waged for an incalculable period of time.



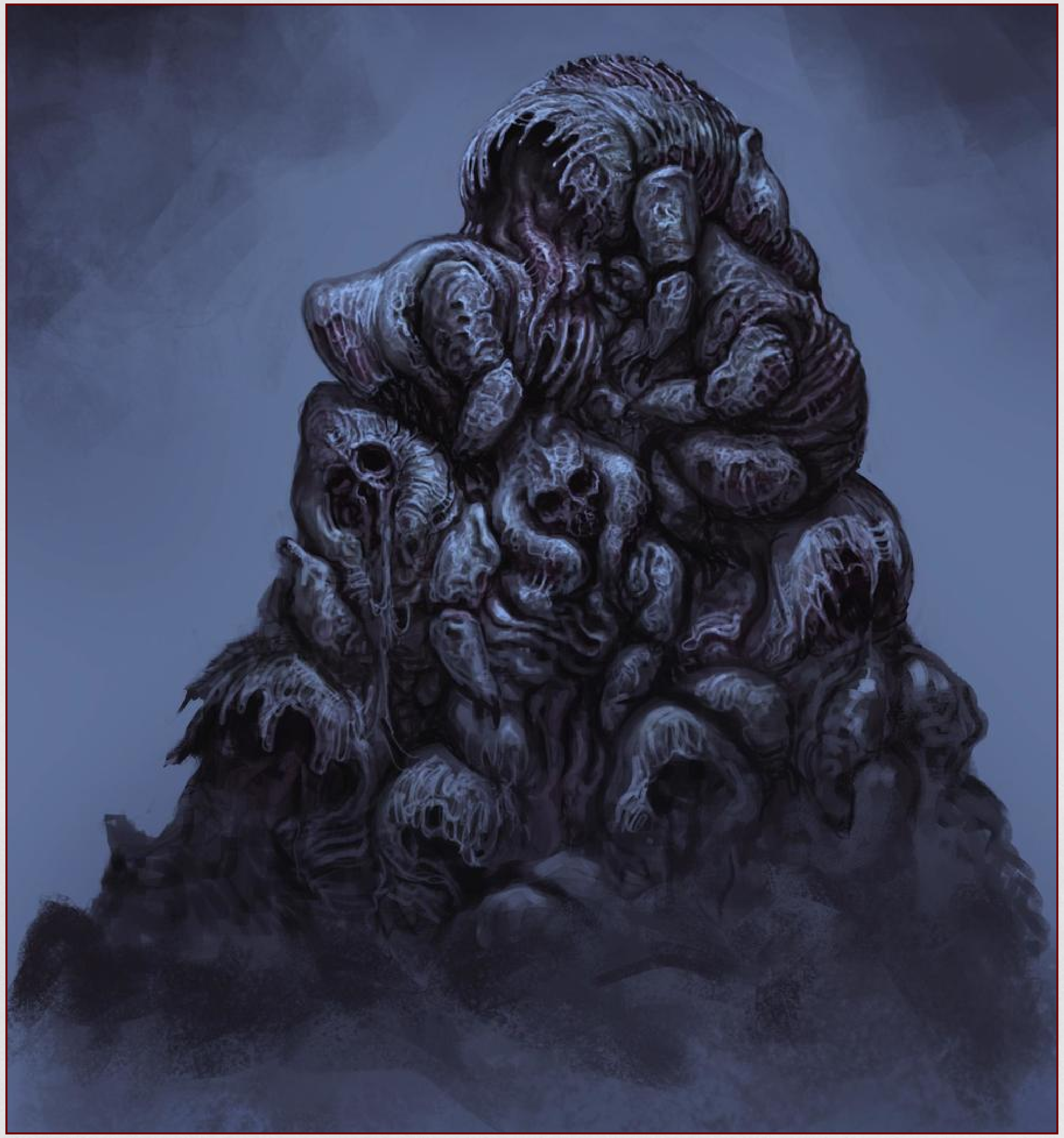
BELOW Some individual homunculi features are visible among the desecrated bodies, but many of the dead are depicted as one homogenized mass.



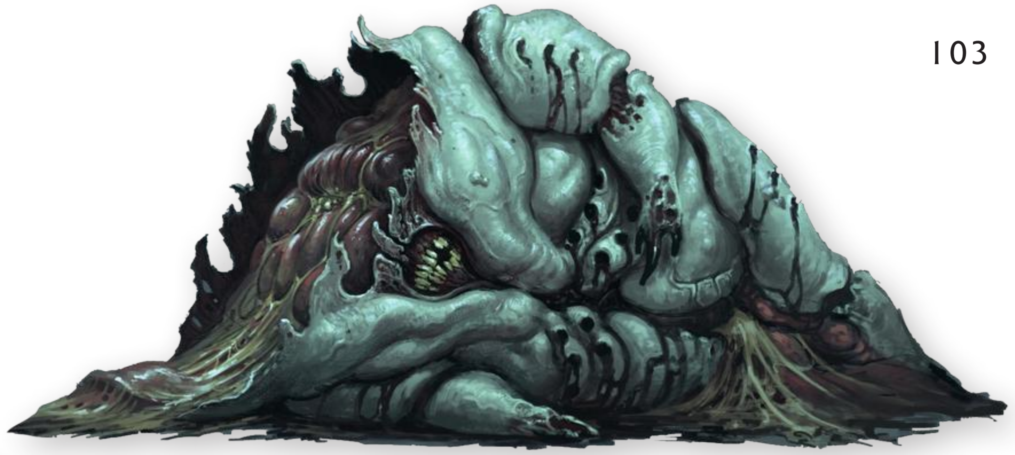
Roiling fog and skies the color of mustard gas only served to further reduce visibility and heighten panic, pushing the armies into inconceivably close quarters before the butchery began. “That’s why you have all these piles of dead bodies,” says Acovic, pointing to the images of felled fighters left to rot in heaps with all the dignity of curbside roadkill.

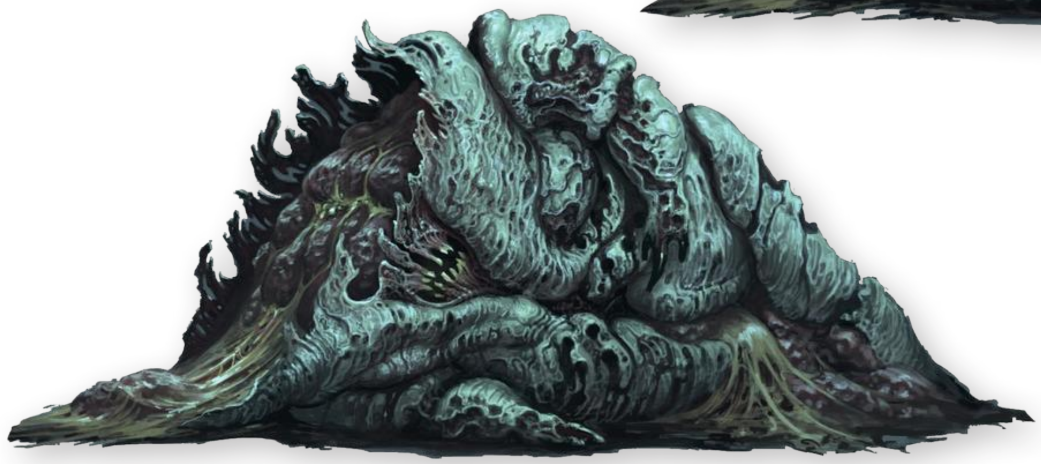
Those bodies make for uncomfortable studying. Due to their artificial construction, homunculus cadavers don’t decay exactly like human remains, making it important to map out the process after death.

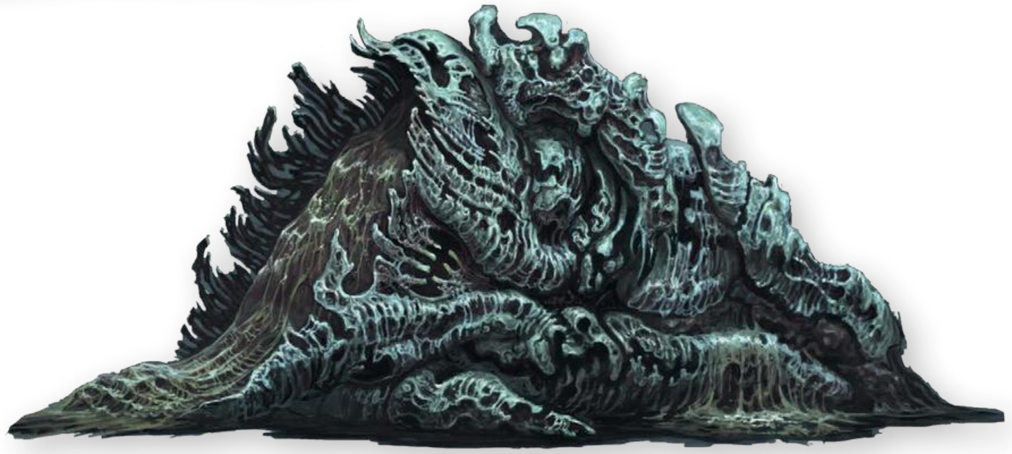
Acovic paints this in gruesome detail: first, depicting an obese victim of war riddled with bullet holes, the top of its head shorn off leaving brain

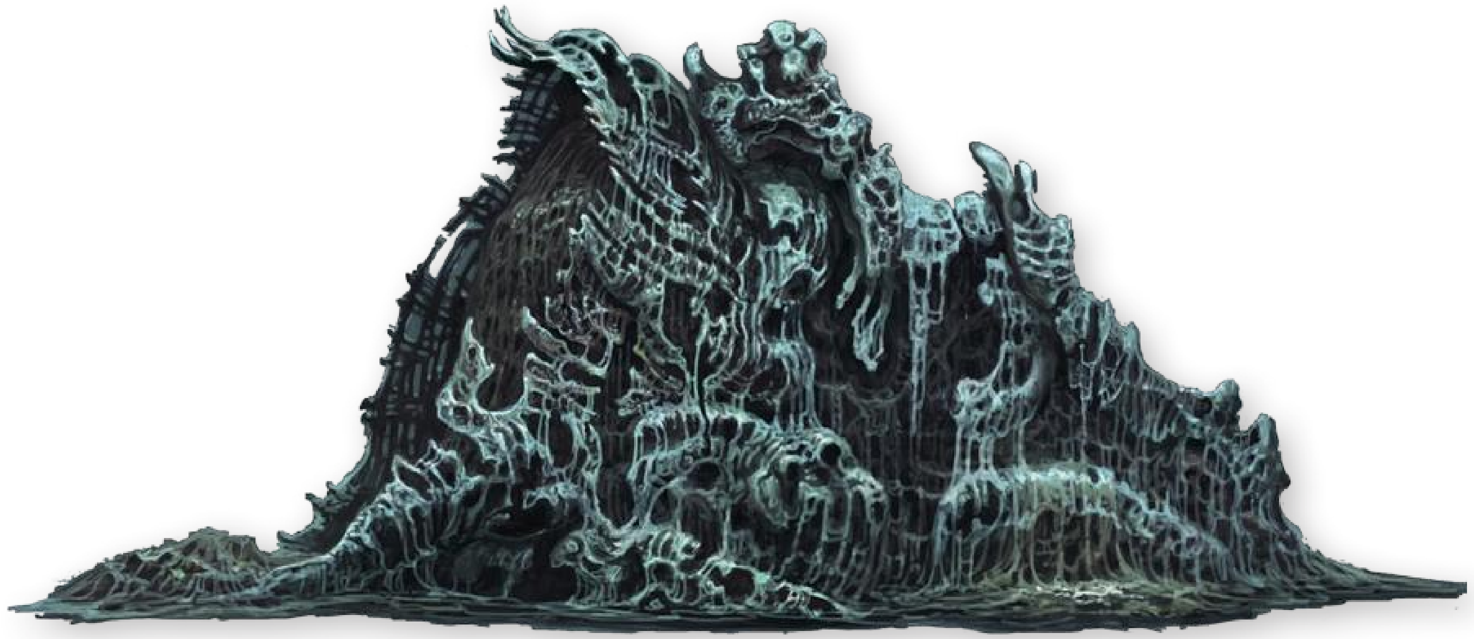


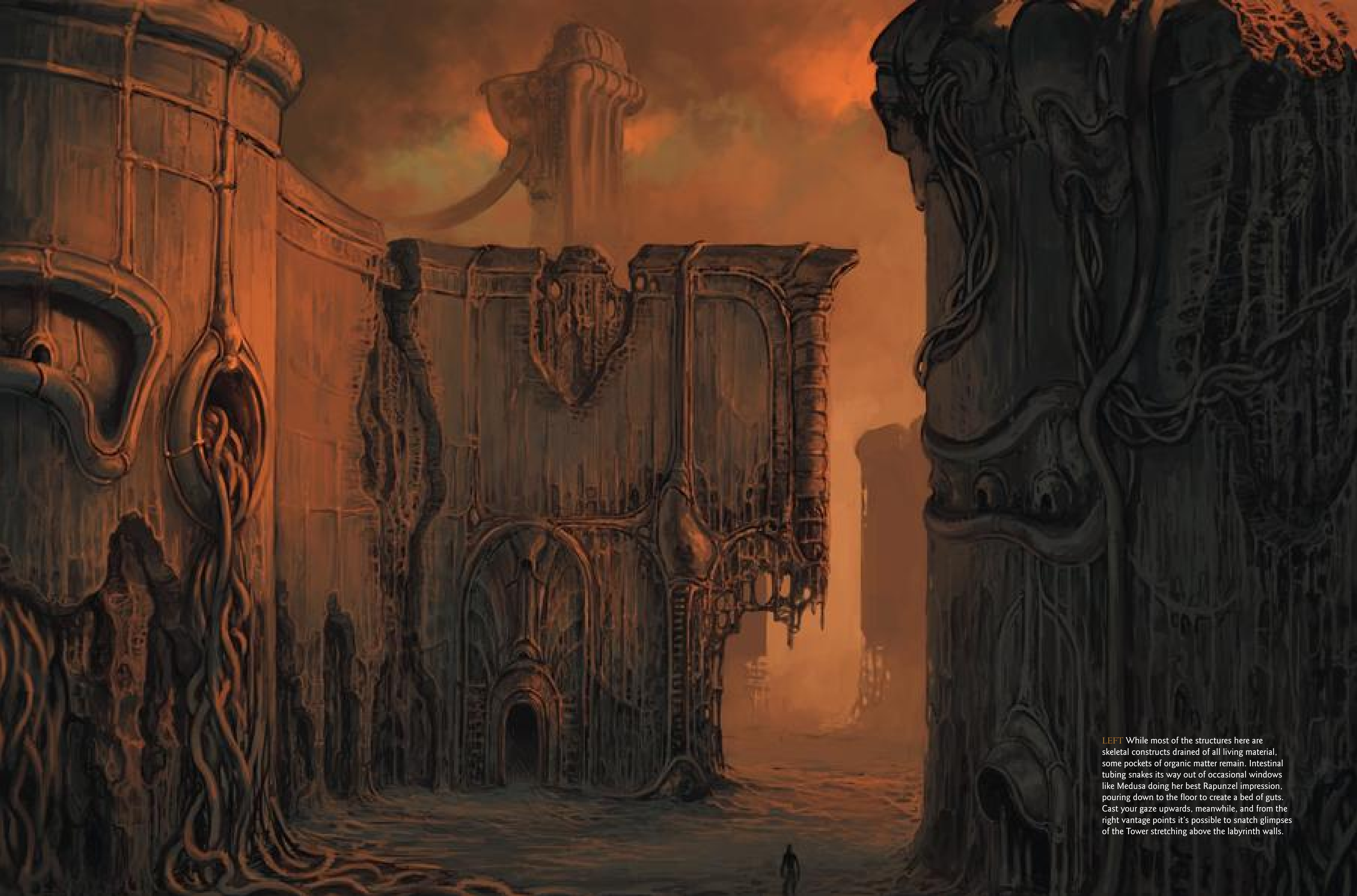
BELOW As the synthetic homunculi bodies decay, their appearance begins to mirror that of the Blasted Labyrinth’s devastated structures.









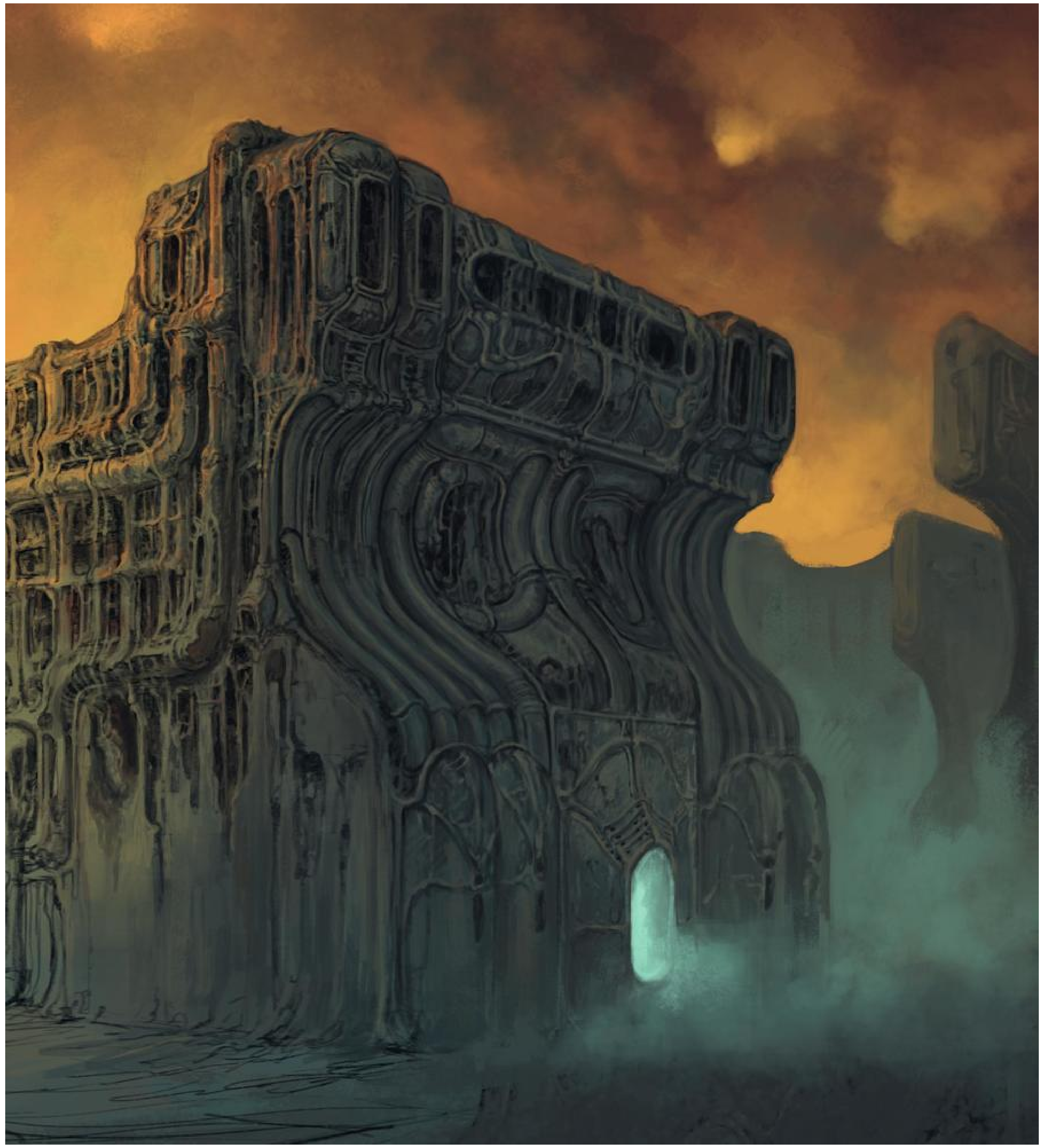


LEFT While most of the structures here are skeletal constructs drained of all living material, some pockets of organic matter remain. Intestinal tubing snakes its way out of occasional windows like Medusa doing her best Rapunzel impression, pouring down to the floor to create a bed of guts. Cast your gaze upwards, meanwhile, and from the right vantage points it's possible to snatch glimpses of the Tower stretching above the labyrinth walls.

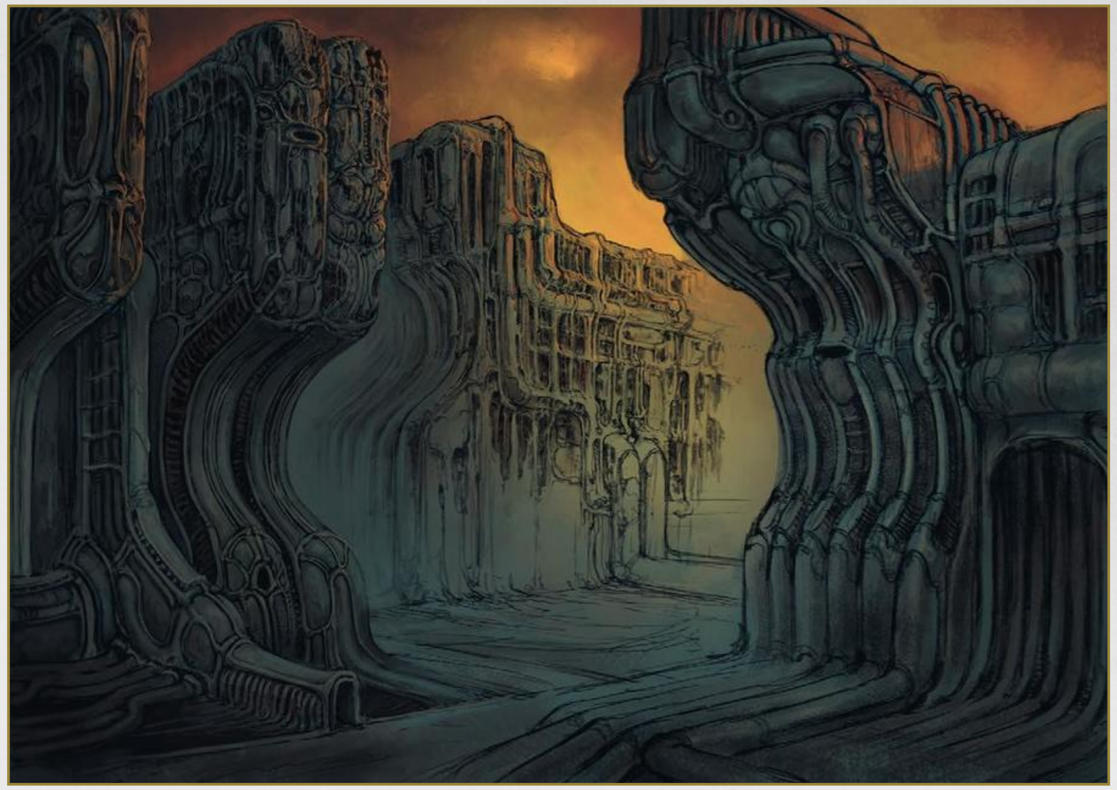
matter and fluid to freely slide outwards. In subsequent images we see innards fully liquefy and then drain off, as its shell first mottles and then begins to flake away in patches.

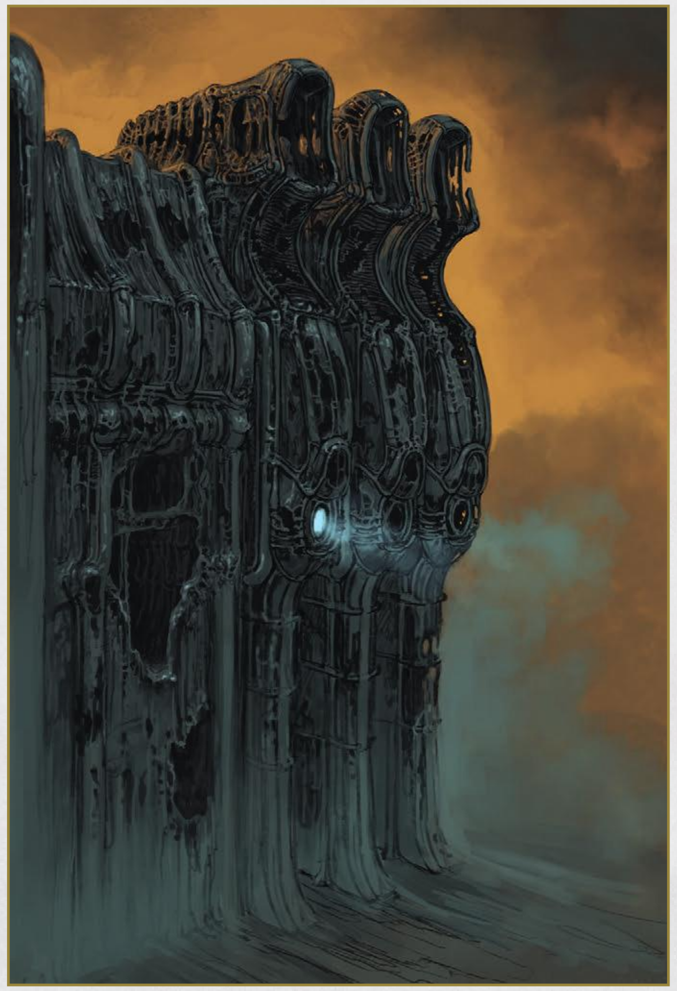
At a glance the end result looks less like a body than it does a ravaged building, striations of hardened skin giving the appearance of rebar shorn of its surrounding masonry. When heaped into mounds it can sometimes be hard to pinpoint individual forms: such is the annihilation and subsequent purification death take on the appearance of a singular entity, certainly not necessarily one you'd associate with having ever lived.

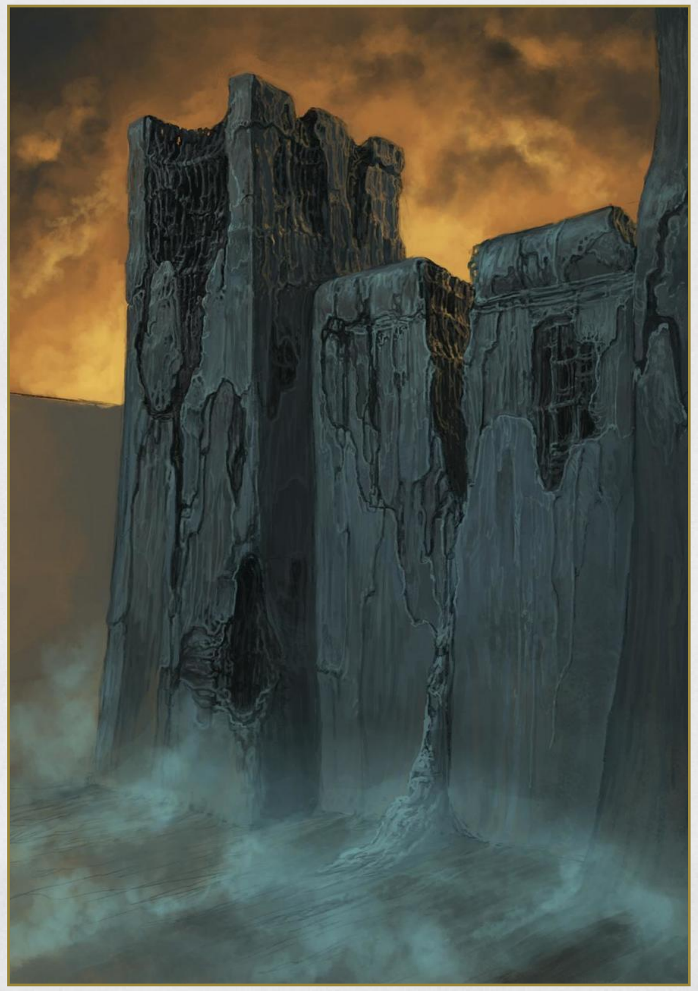
BELOW Complete desiccation from the effects of war robs the Blasted Labyrinth of its more organic qualities.

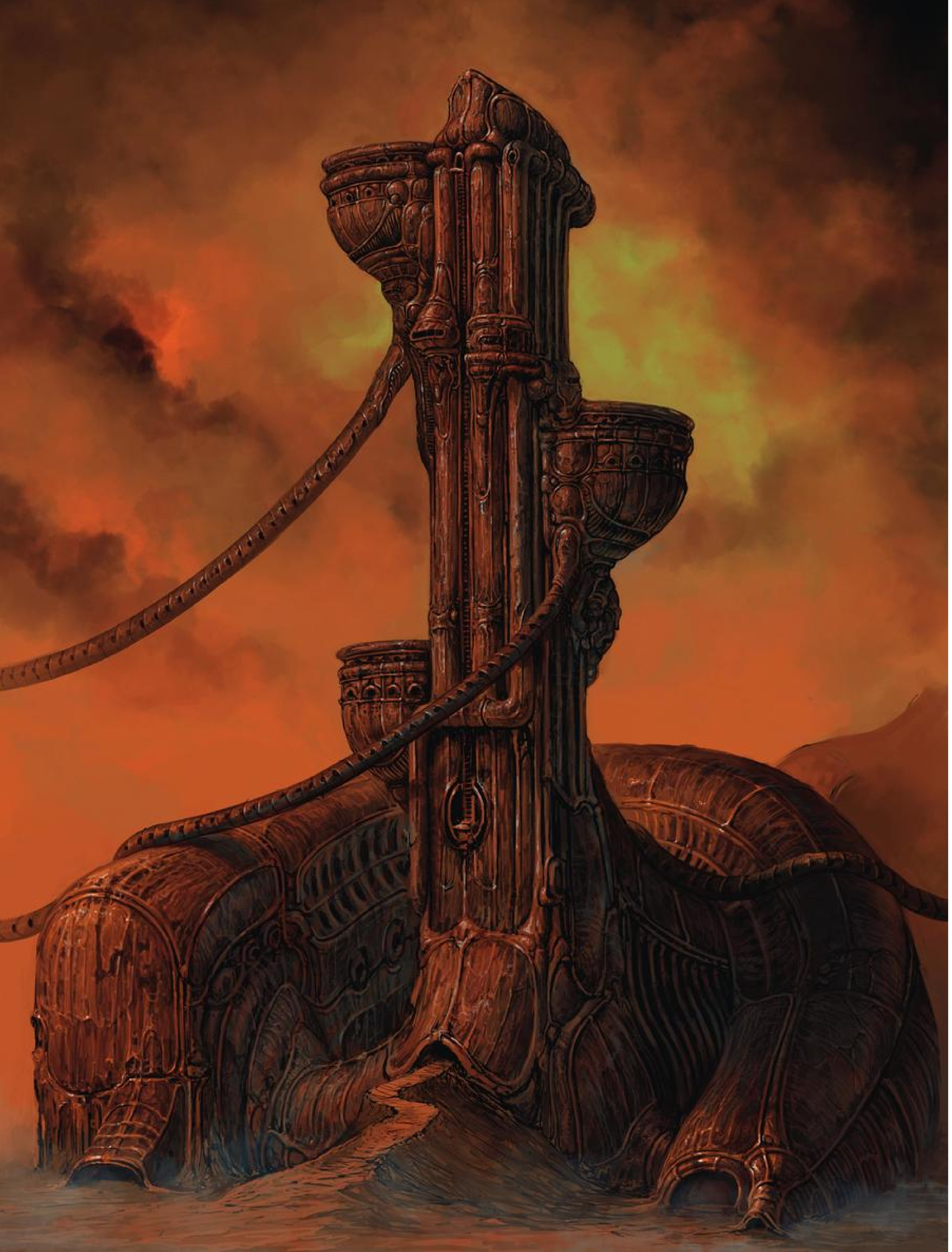


LEFT AND BELOW As natural light struggles to penetrate shelled skies, infrequent bioluminescent light sources spotlight pathways forward through the gloom. Note the mix of curved architecture and flat, shale-like walls stretching upwards.

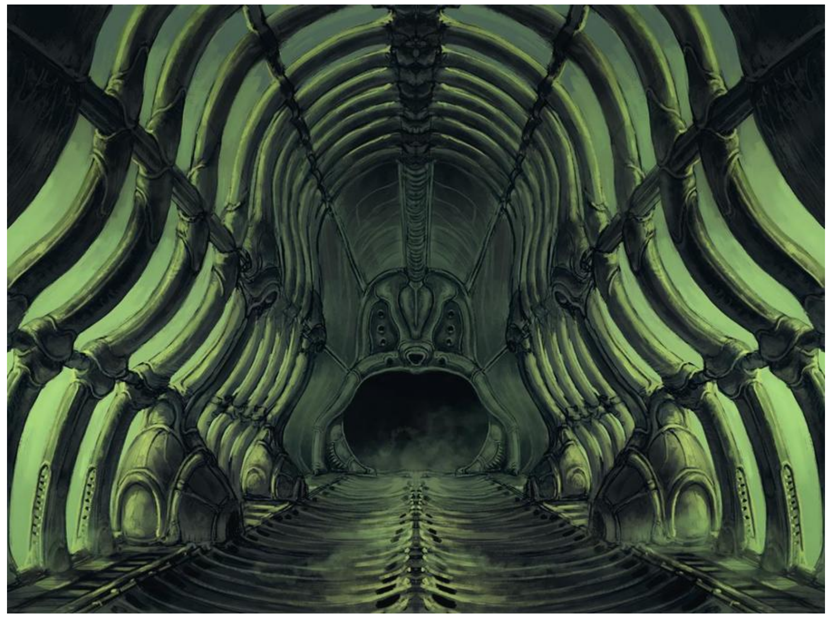








THE TOWER

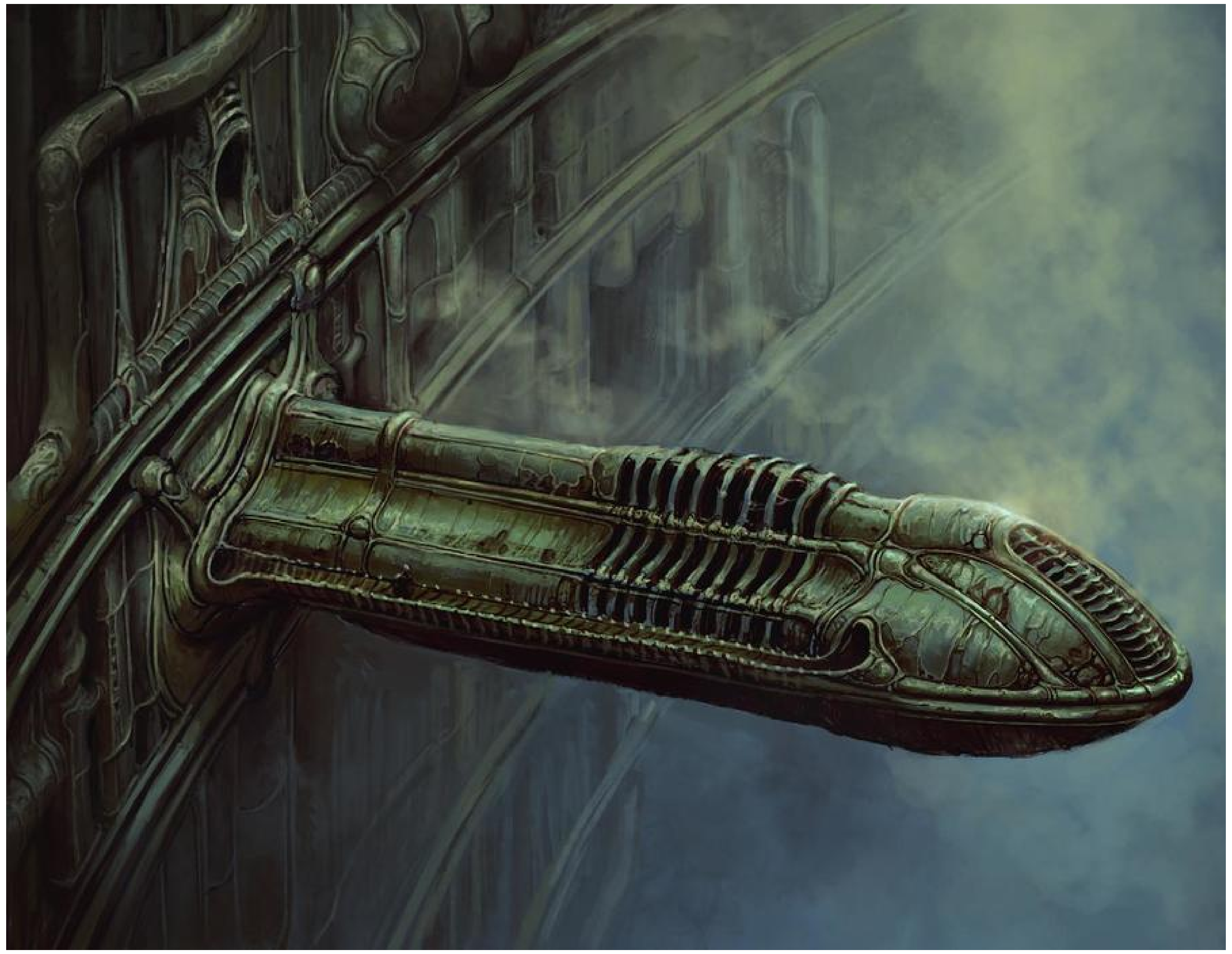


The second planned location to fall out of favor during *Scorn*'s development was the Tower. After players had negotiated the meandering, claustrophobic pathways of the Blasted Labyrinth they were to come face to face with a skyscraper in significantly better shape than most of the other structures so far witnessed at this point on the journey.

A dominating pillar of pipes and ladders with a base encircled by a curving slug of a structure, the Tower's a sickly orange-brown that blends into the reddened clouds behind it. A sloping dirt pathway rising towards a sheathed entranceway makes for an imposing walk, but the tower's most striking external features by far are two thick, elevated tubes

OPPOSITE Once players had cleared the Blasted Labyrinth, they were to meet the Tower as it stood alone on the horizon.

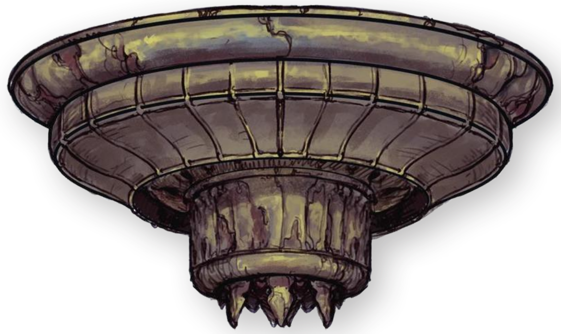
ABOVE AND BELOW The Tower's operations were all to be controlled from within a bridge station protruding from its inner walls.



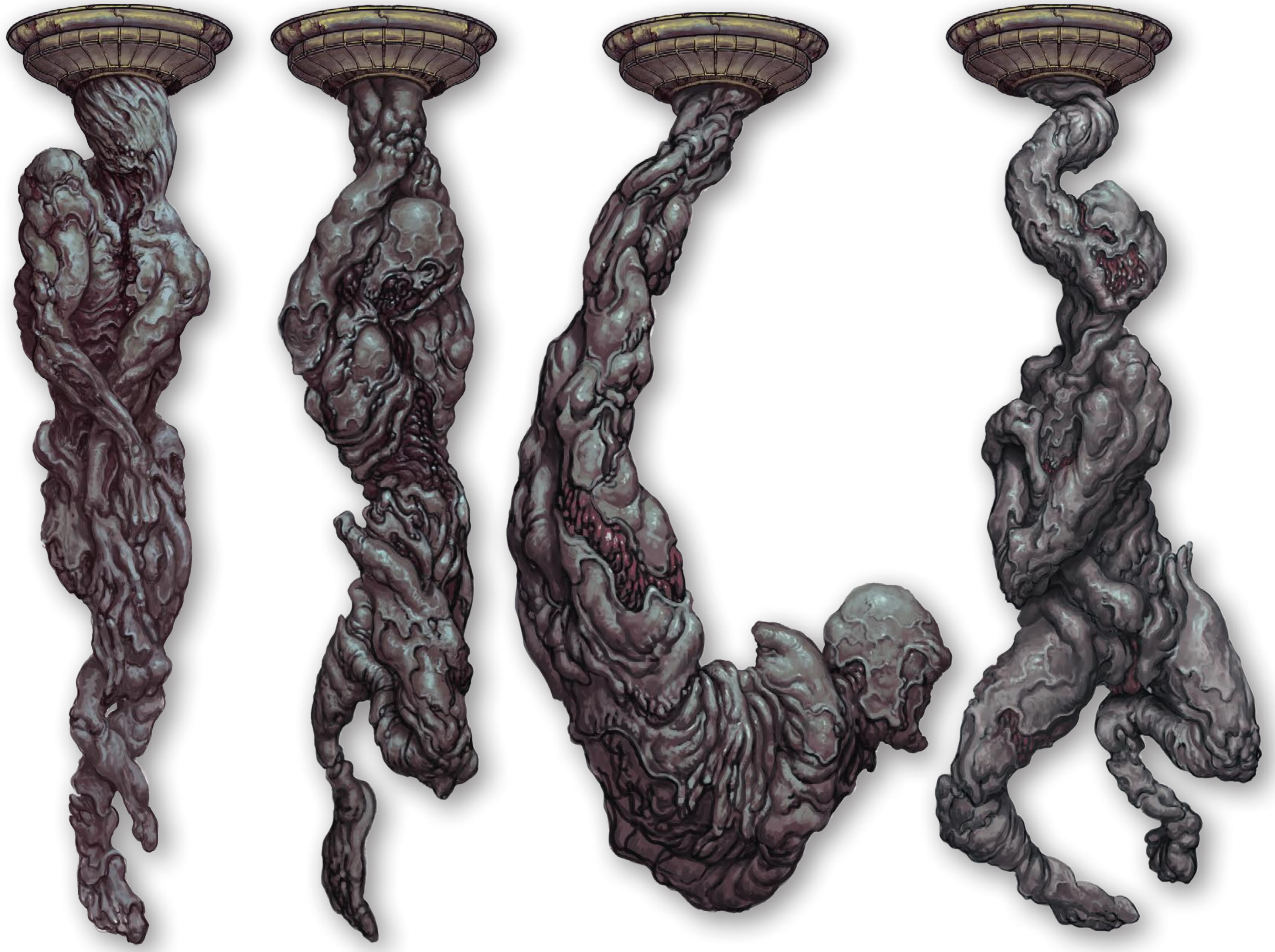
attached to pods high up the tower's shaft, trailing off to the side towards parts unknown like slackened telegraph wires. Their purpose? To carry off endless torrents of meat.

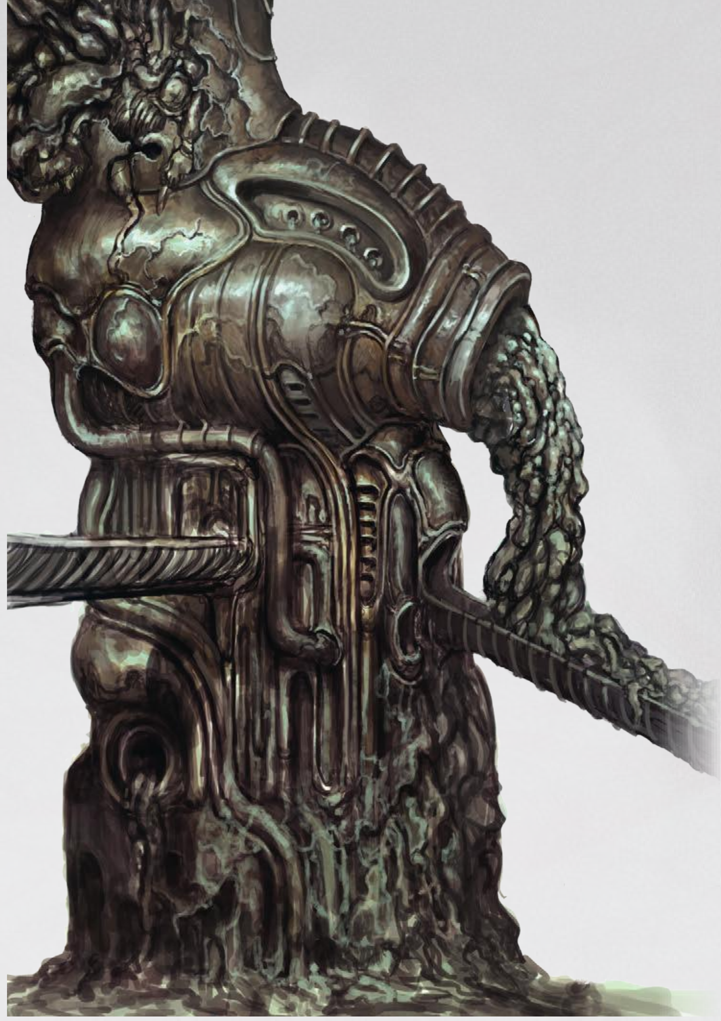
The source lurks at the tower's zenith. Here, the player was to encounter an unfathomably vast monstrosity with a body the size of a tunnel boring machine. Or, rather, encounter part of this monstrosity.

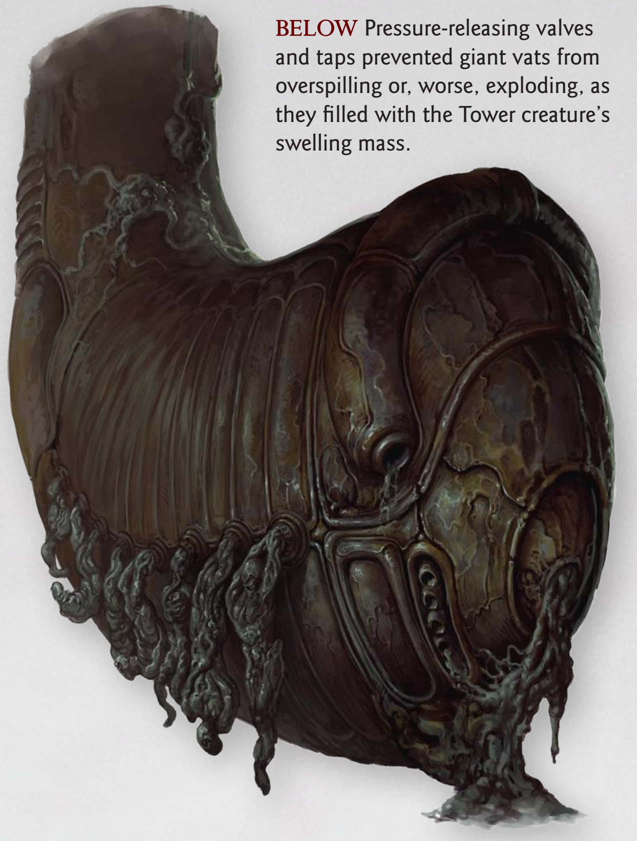
"The body of this creature was permeating the entire building," explains concept artist Filip Acovic. Studying the external tower image dimensions armed with this knowledge to try



THIS PAGE Floods of contorted creatures would have been created when organic paste was squeezed through valves similar to children's putty.



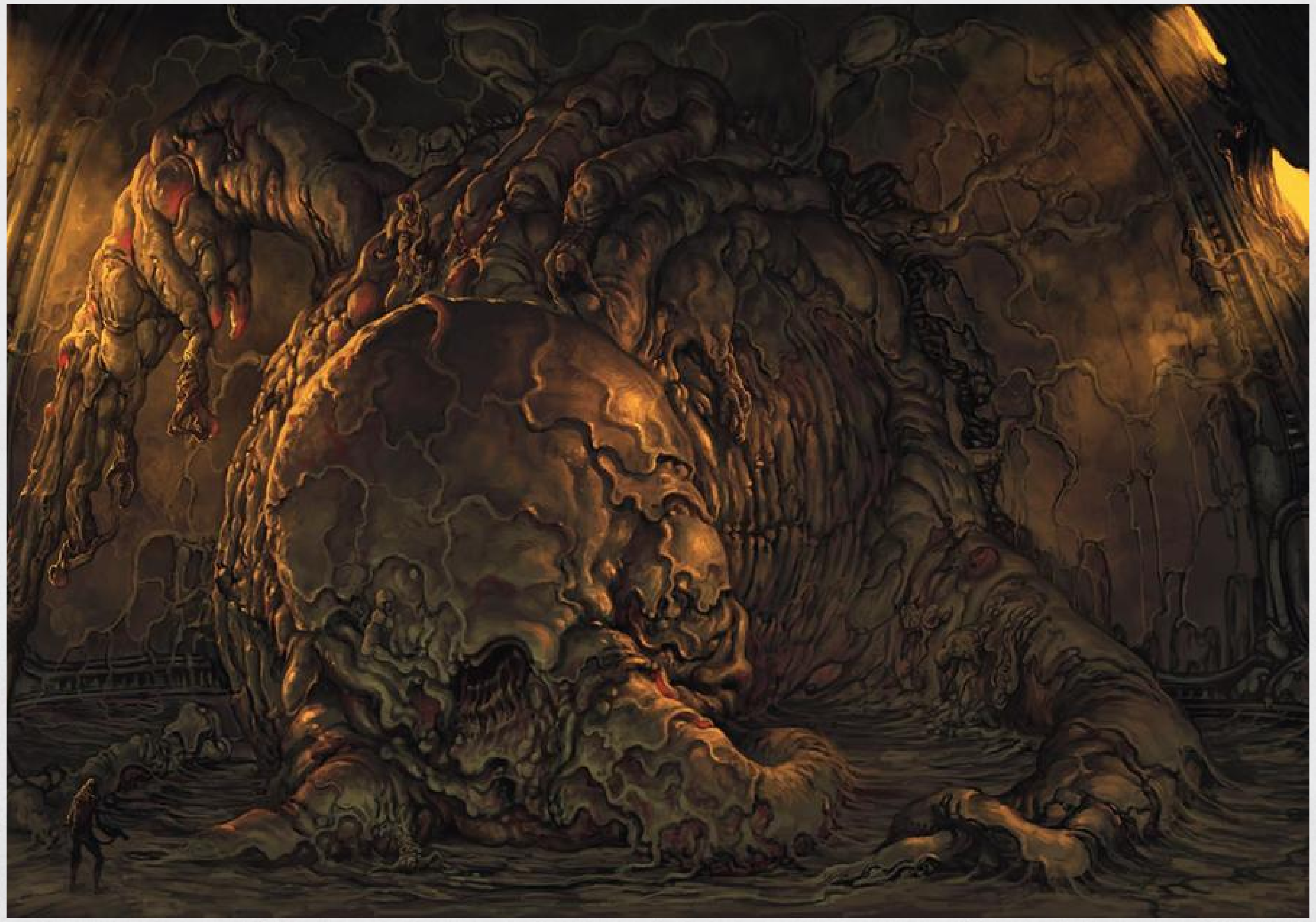




BELOW Pressure-releasing valves and taps prevented giant vats from overspilling or, worse, exploding, as they filled with the Tower creature's swelling mass.

ABOVE Players would have been tasked with feeding the creature's runaway growths through a grinder to clear a path forward.

BELOW The giant creature at the top of the Tower is cursed with an ever-growing bulk, from which legions of monsters are formed.



and grasp the magnitude of such a being is a dizzying task, and reframes the Tower not as a lair but as a prison.

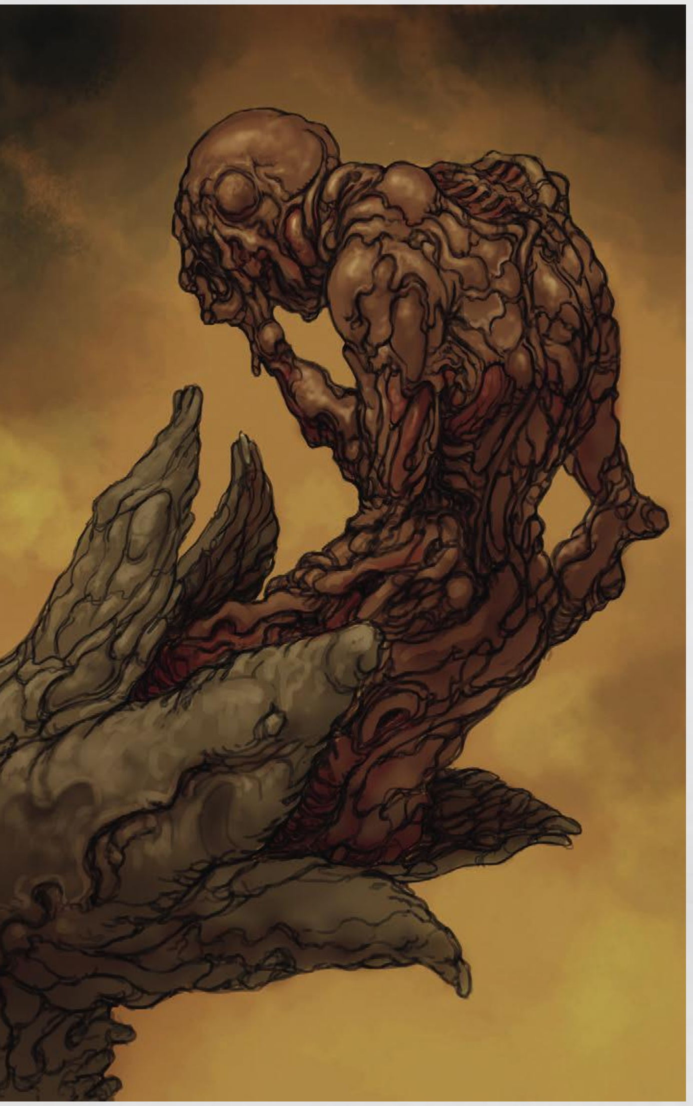
Up at the Tower's apex that creature can do little but wallow in pain due to a rapidly expanding bulk. Its trunked head, the shape of a sludge-covered antique gas mask, and its thick but ultimately useless appendages, are a pitiful sight. The barreling body extends back through its cell wall and down through the Tower, where some of the bulk is channeled into a monumental grinder, shearing and mulching the excess meat to keep the creature's size in check. The discarded slurry, meanwhile, is piped away from the tower.

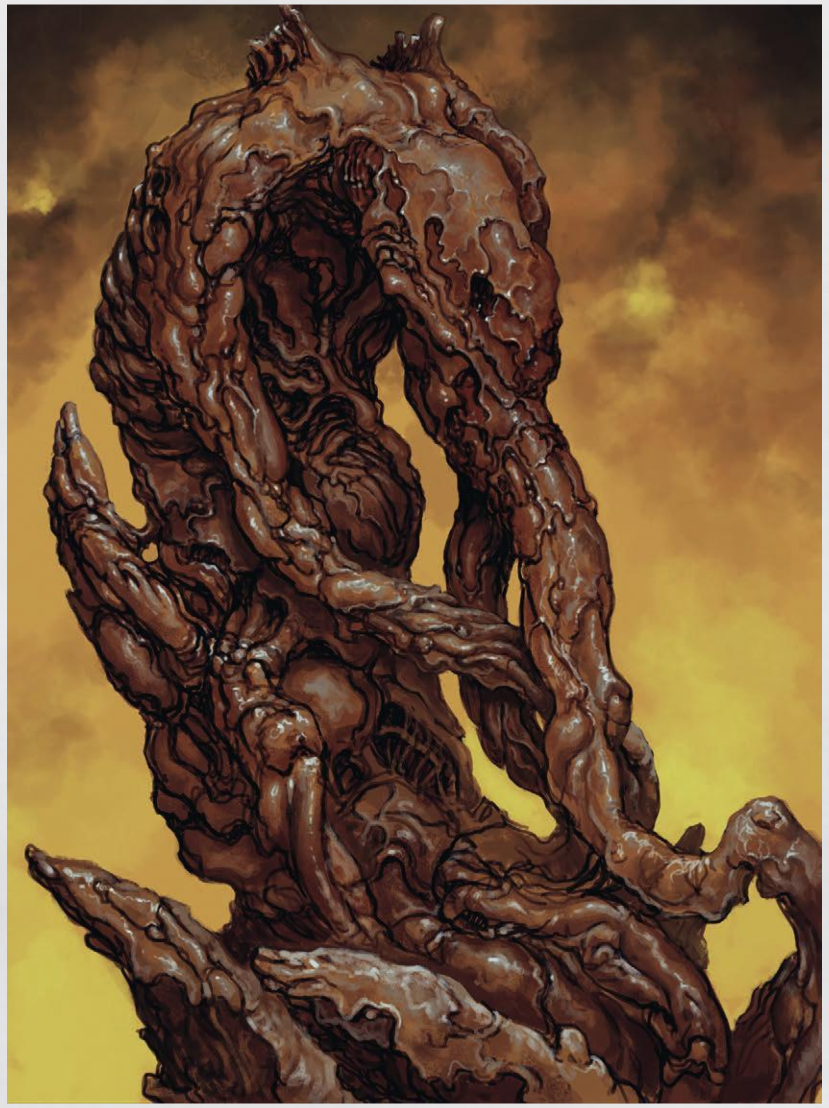
Other growths wind down the tower's channels into processing units. In one area, Acovic draws a humongous tank with regularly spaced valves. A process of metamorphosis is underway here, but no butterfly will ever emerge from this crusted synthetic cocoon. Instead, writhing, contorted humanoid bodies are squeezed out of the vat's pores like modeling clay or toothpaste, rows of conjoined progeny all sharing the same agony.

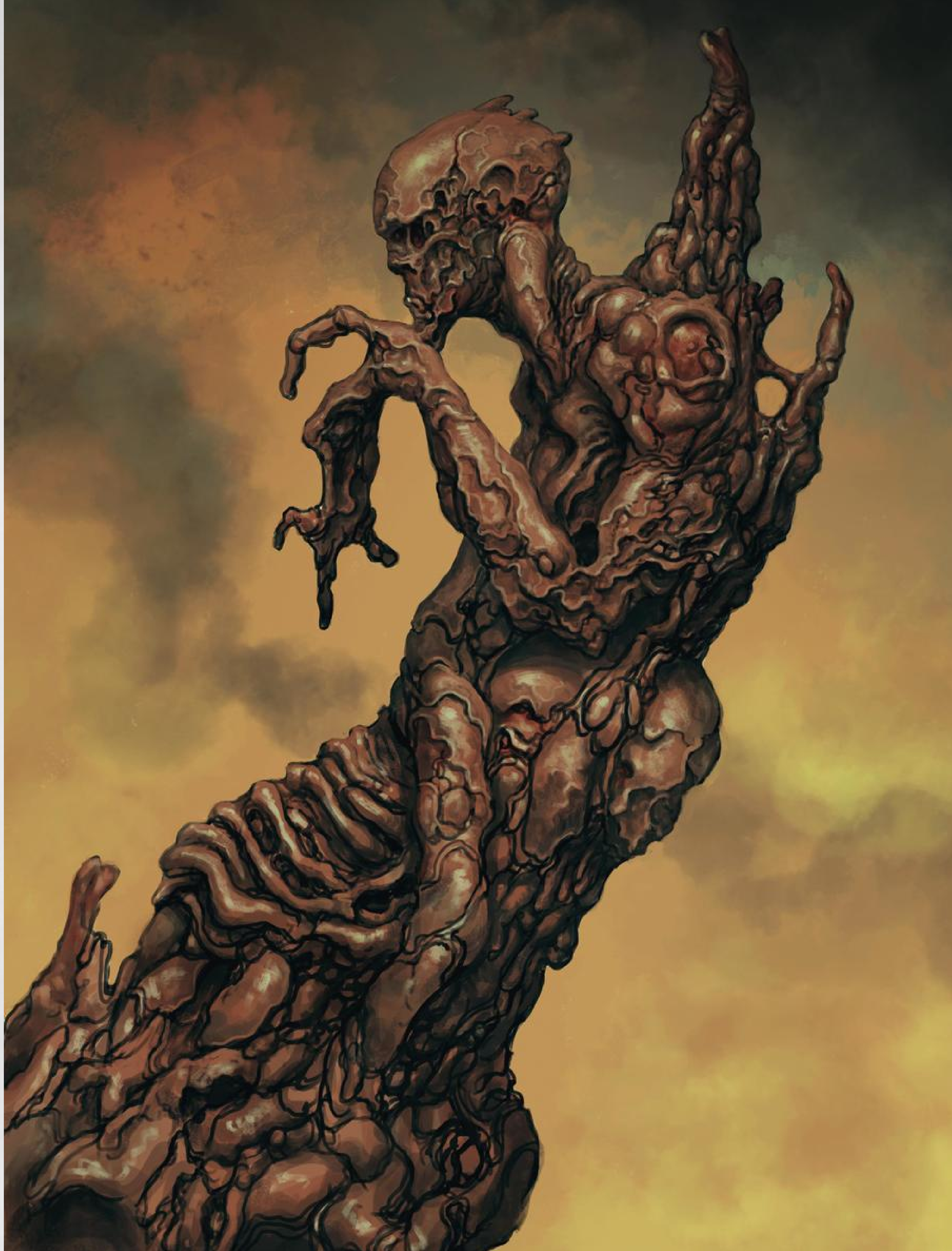
In the end, the Tower's main concepts were too closely related to those of the Crater for both locations to exist. "It was really similar," remarks Acovic, pointing out that both locations were built around a single creature of epic proportions, doomed to ceaselessly birth offspring. The locations' physical attributes may have been diametrically opposed—one creature lived at the base of a deep crater, the other at the tip of a towering citadel—but the overlapping functions made the Tower a logical location to lose to ensure that players feel surprised at every turn.

OPPOSITE Mutations are rife in the Tower, growing without control in a cancerous manner.

BELOW The Tower's army of erupted creatures aren't limited to humanoid bodies.







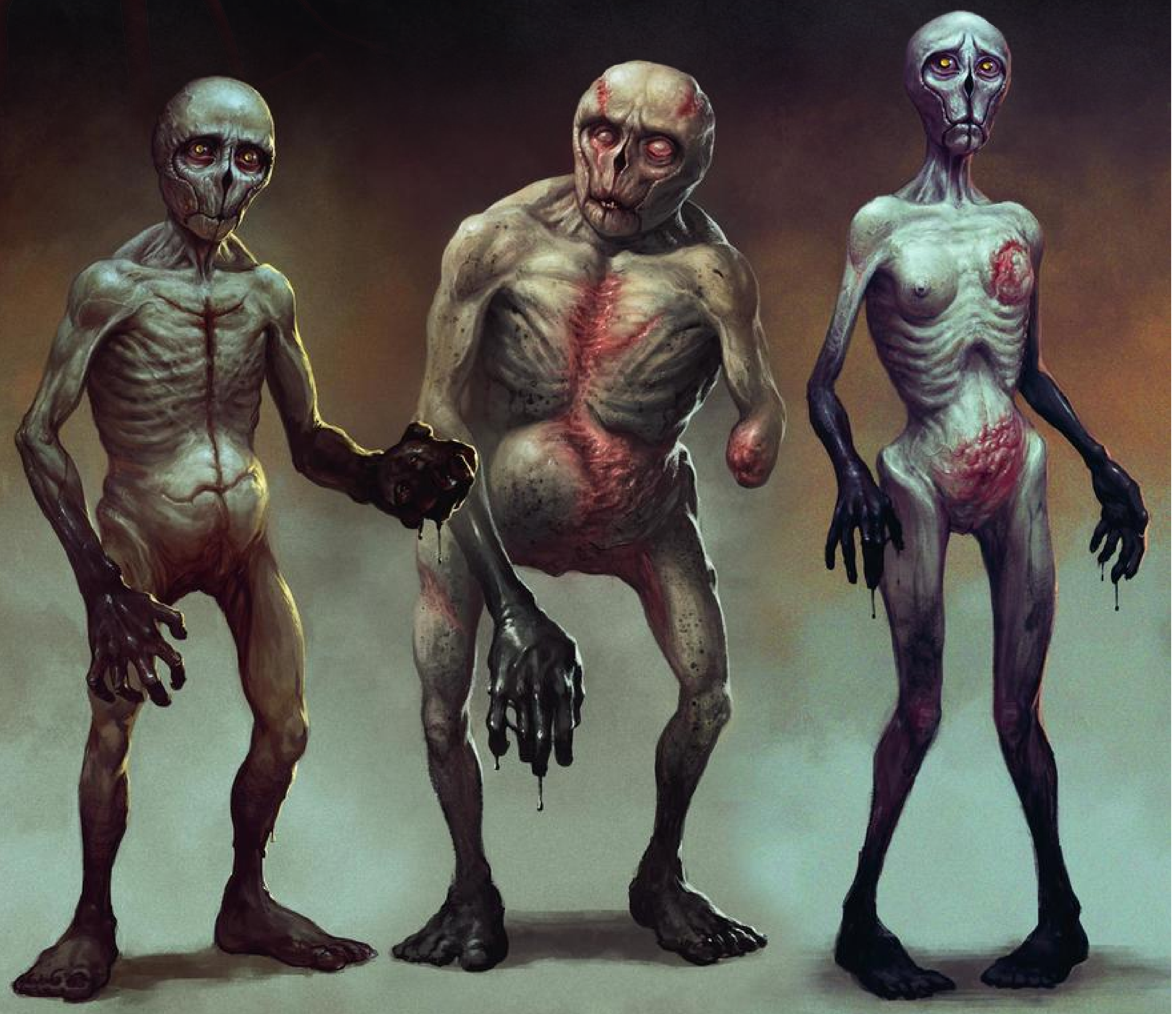
INHABITANTS

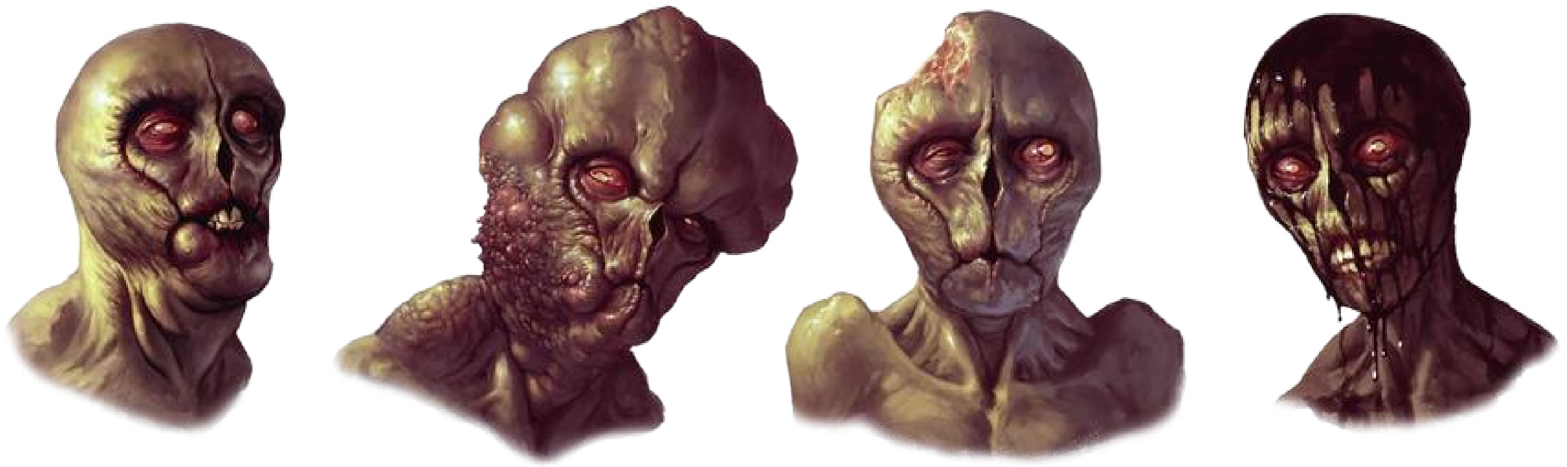
MOLDMEN

The story of these strange mutilated beings is one of trauma. The hens in the Assembly's battery farm, they are humanoids bred as bodies to be utilized They're not even given the dignity of a name, though the team refers to them as Moldmen on account of their processed forms.

This act of processing is an excruciating, inhumane procedure that first involves pressing the body ("which takes time," says concept artist Filip Acovic), then molding it into a package, and then leaving the contorted, crumpled remains to dry out into usable nuggets. "They go through this entire process alive, and that is the true horror of their situation," Acovic emphasizes.

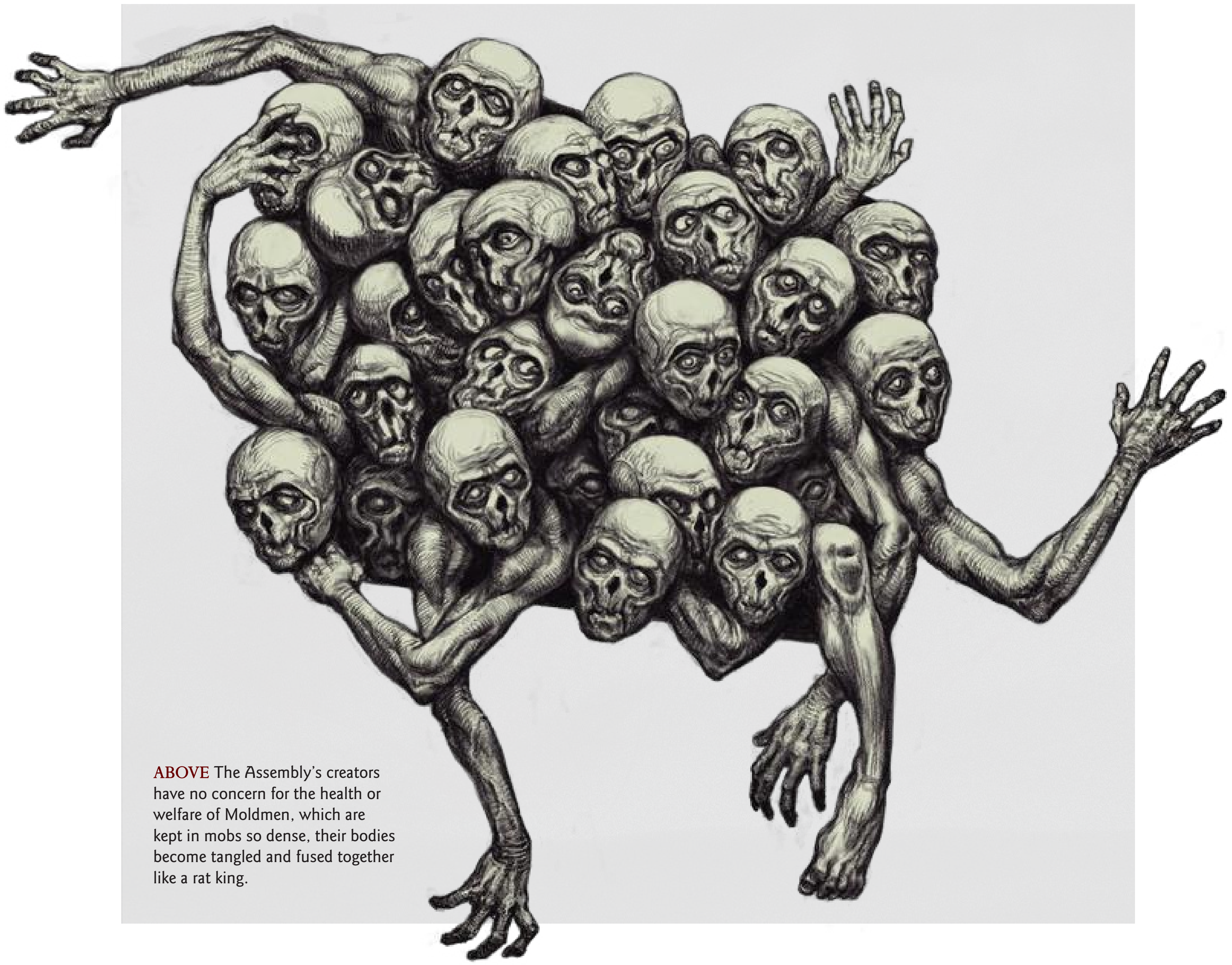
"I never wanted to make an ethical or moral judgment on why things are the way they are,"





OPPOSITE "The Moldmen are supposed to be very innocent looking, and in a bit of a predicament," says game director Ljubomir Peklar.

ABOVE Wide pink pupils are symptoms of generations of breeding in darkness. Moldmen can just about see their immediate surroundings, but not without difficulty.

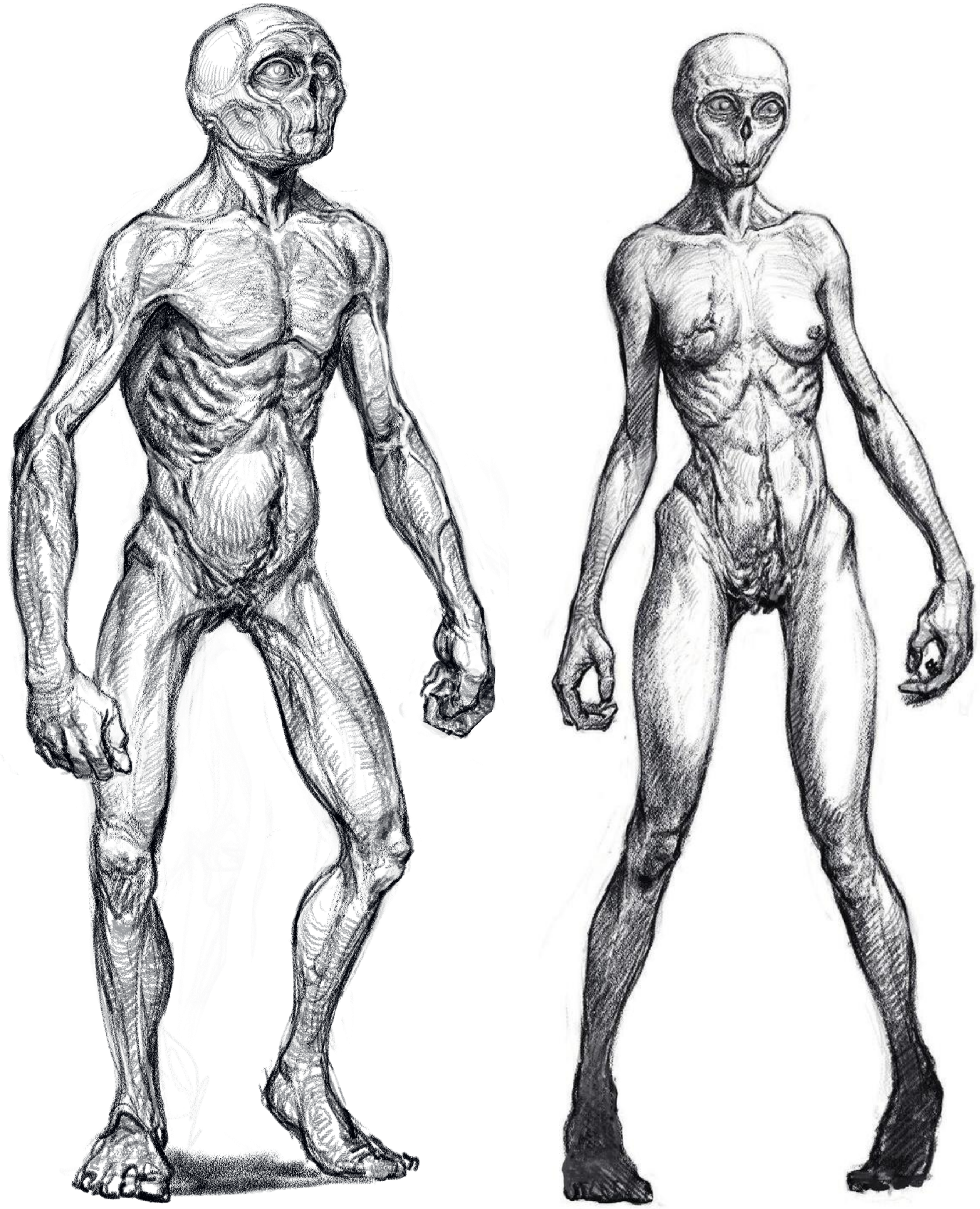


ABOVE The Assembly's creators have no concern for the health or welfare of Moldmen, which are kept in mobs so dense, their bodies become tangled and fused together like a rat king.

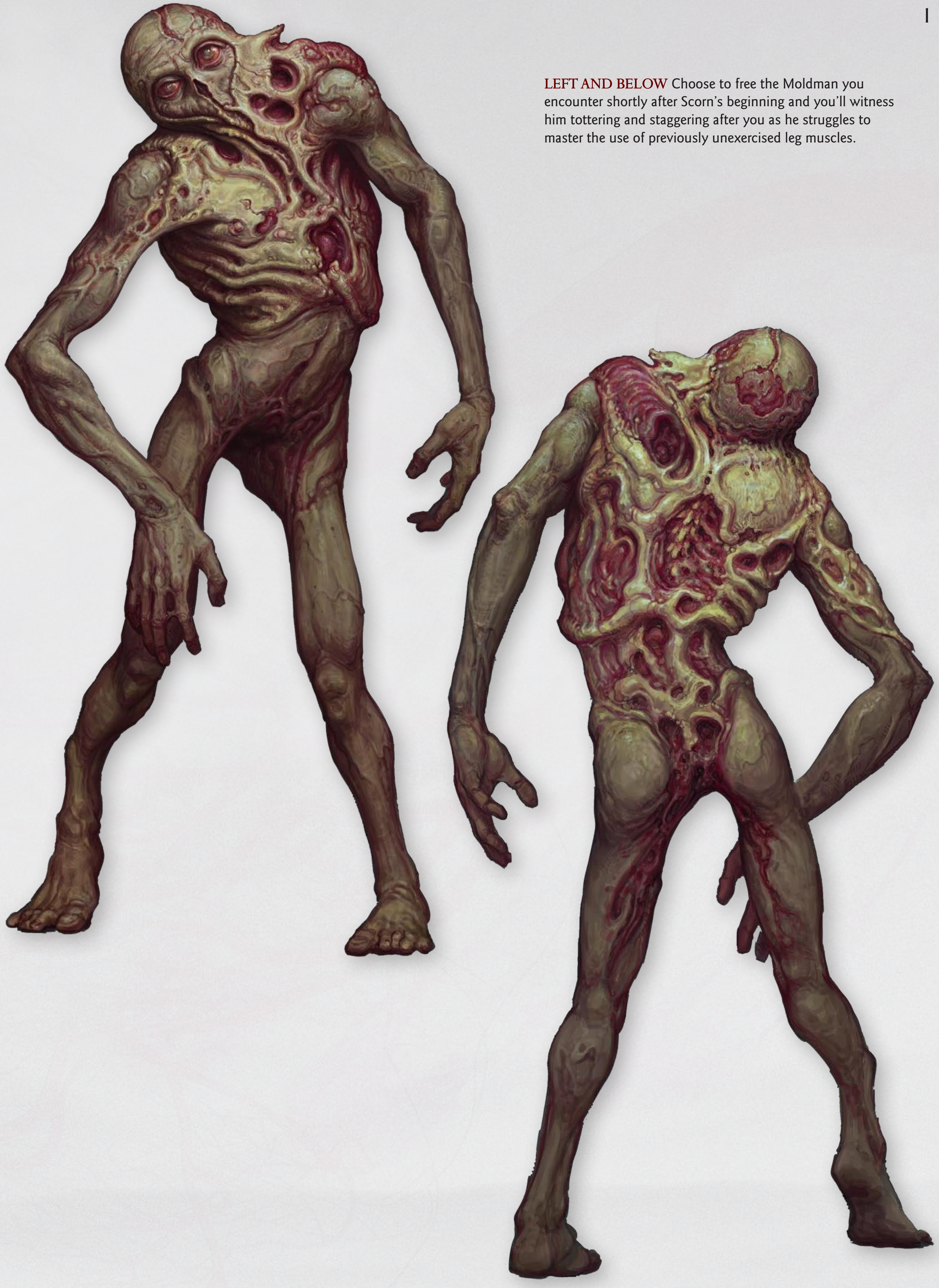
says game director Ljubomir Peklar. It's a luxury that isn't extended to players as during your trek through the Assembly it's incumbent on you to decide whether to execute one of these pre-processed people—for material gain—or to free him and miss out on the reward.

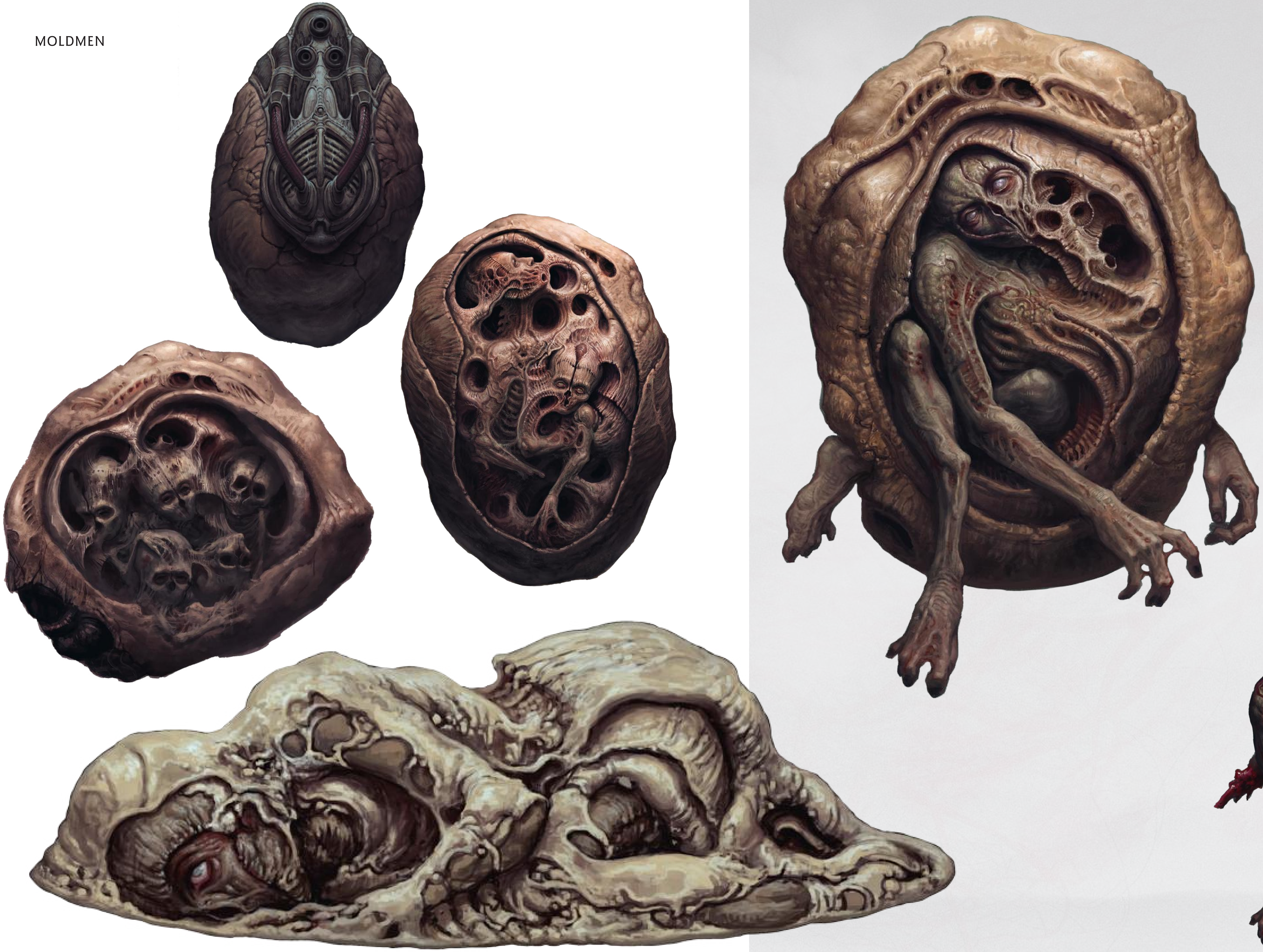
"The implications of your moral choices are kind of vague," Acovic warns. "Sparing him doesn't necessarily mean that this is a good or a moral choice. He is in such a state of pain and agony that it might be crueler to leave him alive and suffering. Maybe you're damning him to a much slower and more painful death."

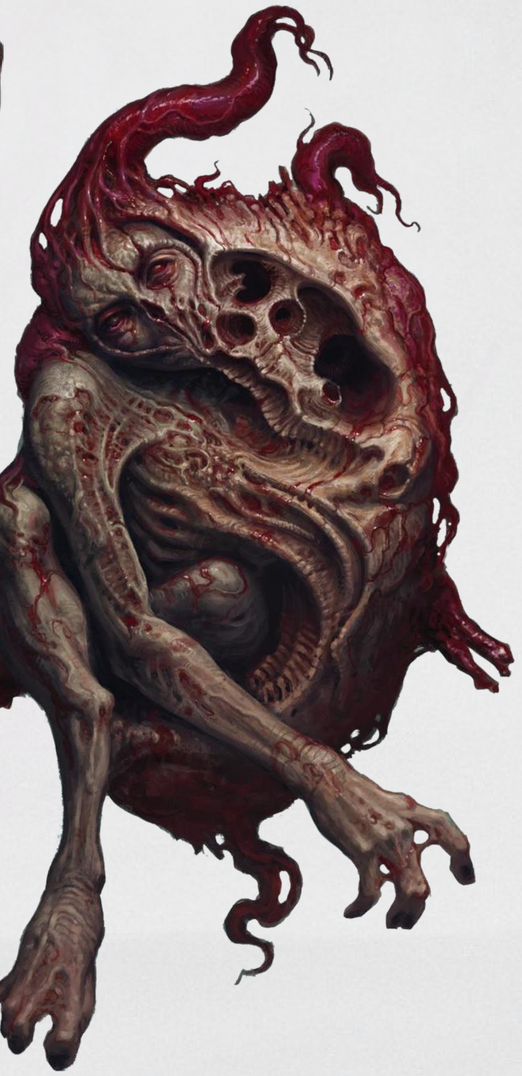
BELOW Not only are Moldmen defenseless, they don't even possess any self-preservation instincts and would struggle to act against anybody attempting to cause them harm.



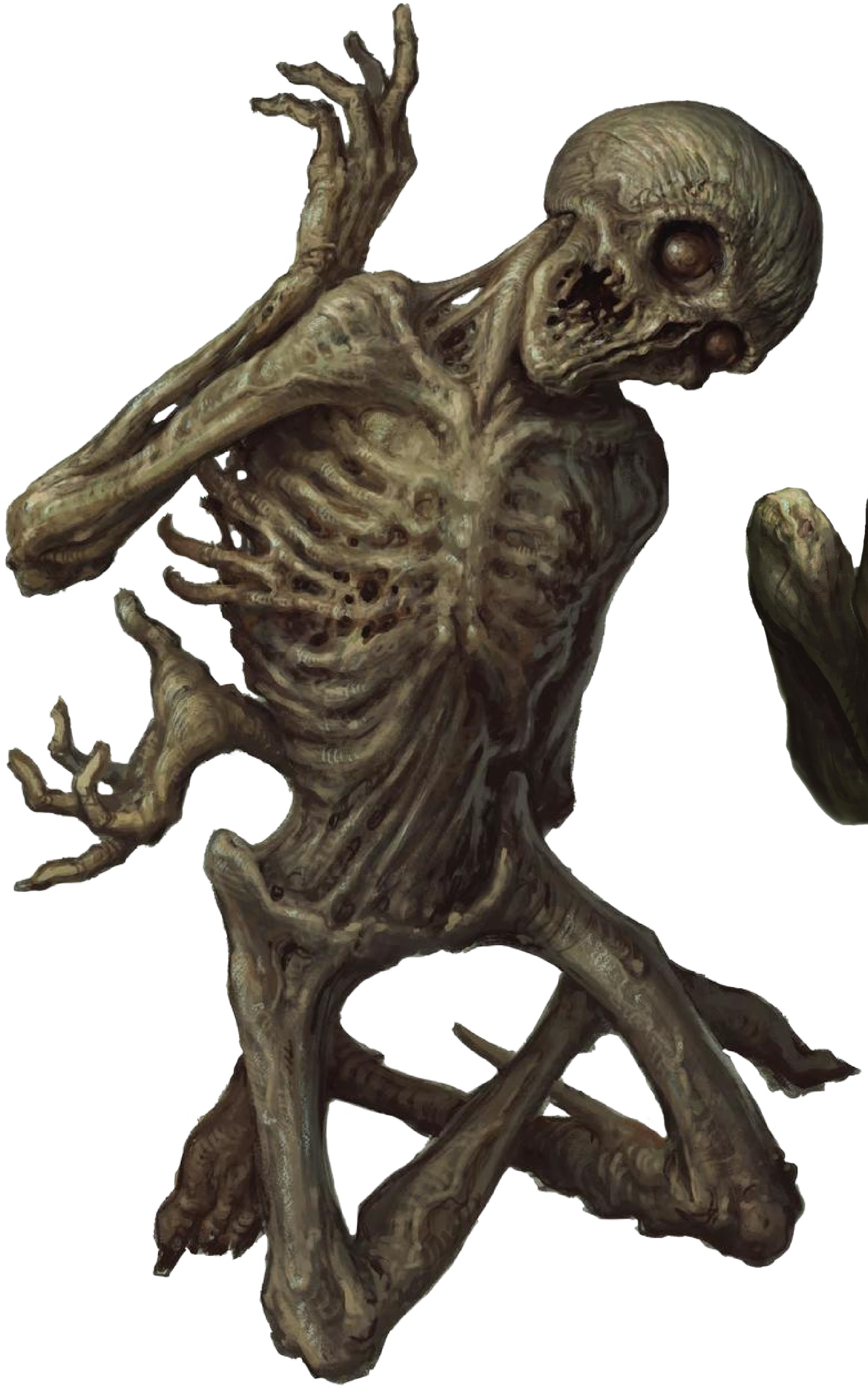
LEFT AND BELOW Choose to free the Moldman you encounter shortly after Scorn's beginning and you'll witness him tottering and staggering after you as he struggles to master the use of previously unexercised leg muscles.

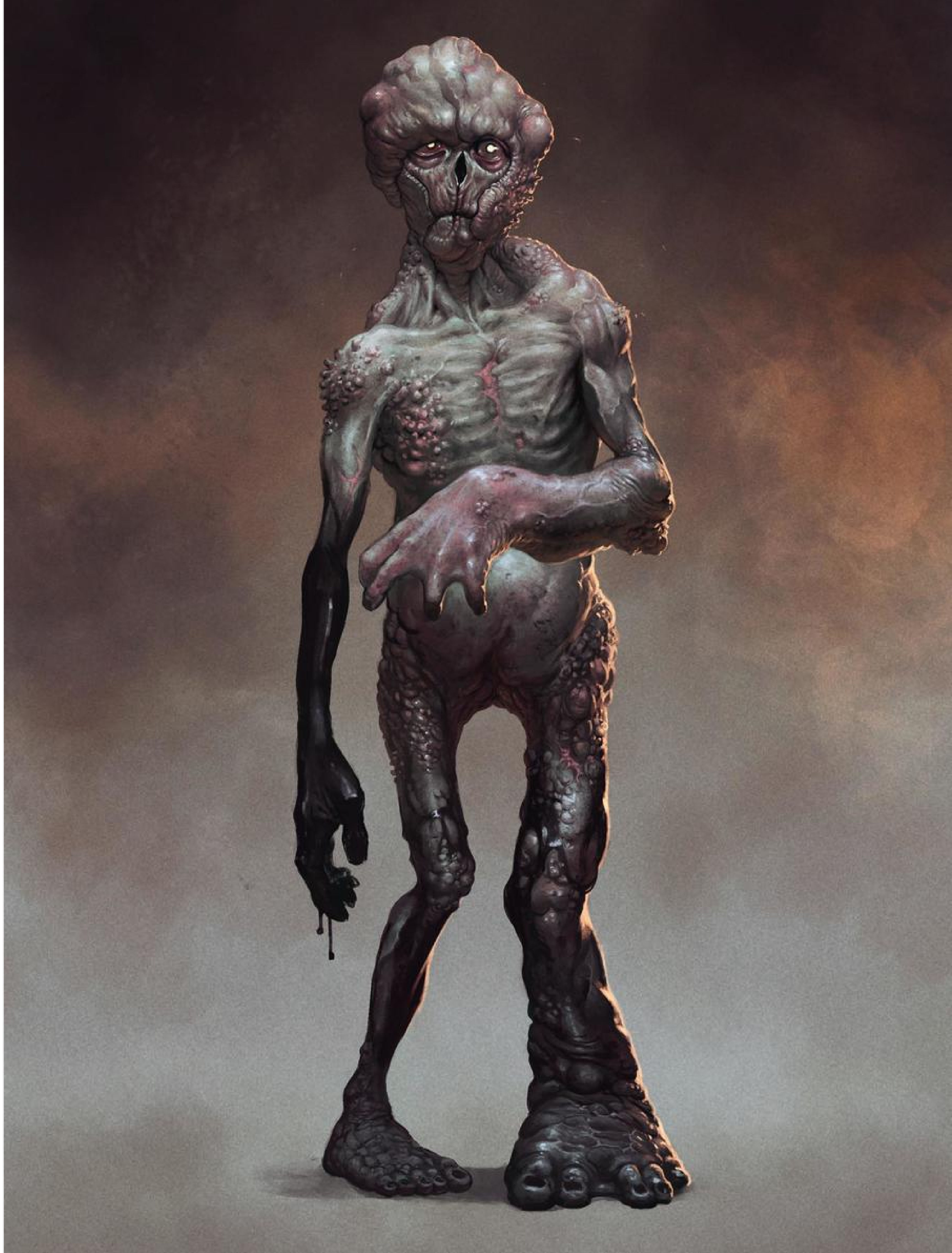






THIS SPREAD Concept artist Filip Acovic considers processed Moldmen to be "a packaged product," encased in a hard shell much in the same way as some supermarkets stock cuts of meat inside vacuum sealed plastic. The difference here is that the Moldmen are still alive inside their fossilized bindings.





LEFT Scores of Moldmen husks litter the Assembly's corridors, swept into corners like piles of dirt.

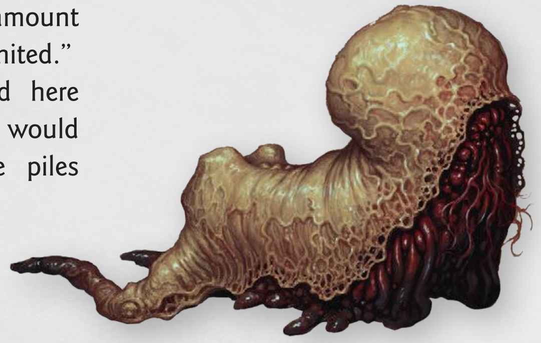
OPPOSITE Poor conditions within the Assembly mean disease and deformation are rampant within the Moldmen population.

CRATER CREATURES

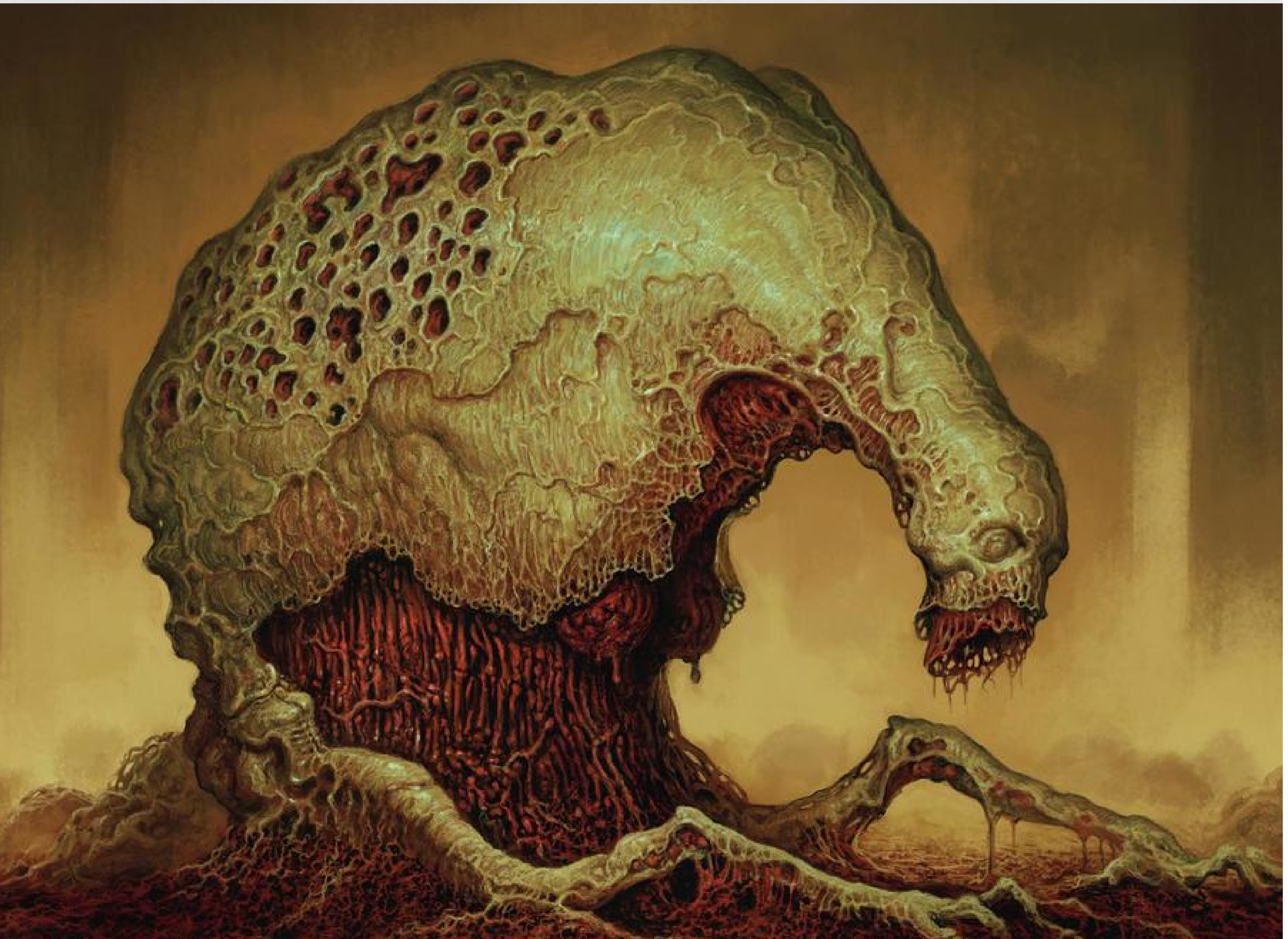
"What if a creature maniacally started spitting out already established DNA sequences in the hope that some of them adapt, as there is no time for standard evolutionary process?" asks game director Ljubomir Peklar. It was this hypothesizing that set concept artist Filip Acovic on the path to creating a suite of different creatures for *Scorn*'s Crater location during the game's early design phases. Beings with shared DNA and built from the exact same materials, forced into instantaneous evolutionary jumps that result in horrific, semi-functional mash-ups of recognizable and indescribable animalistic elements.

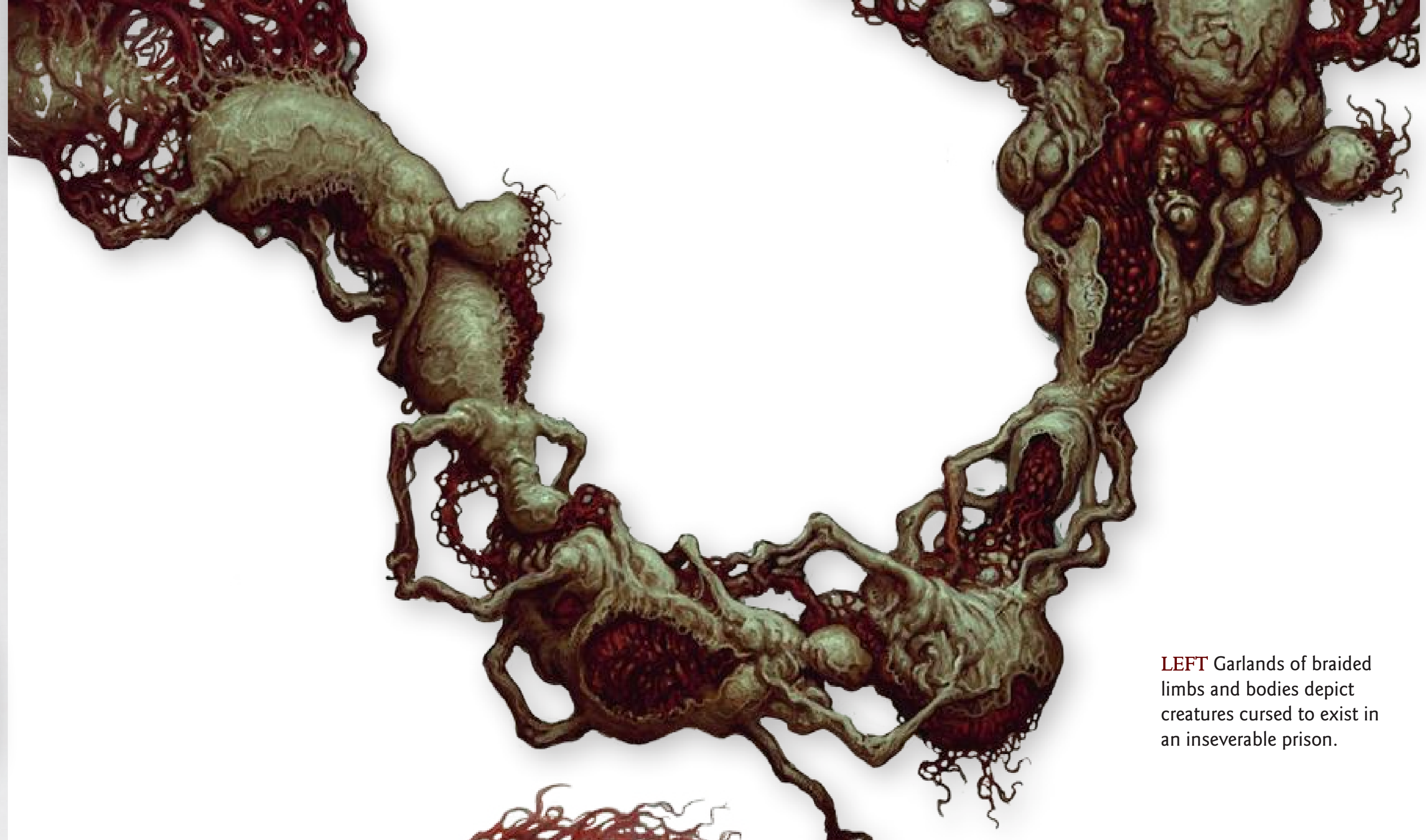
It all begins with the nameless form we'll call the Crater queen. A hunched monstrosity composed of sinewy strands and tumors, then wrapped in a bleached, leathery hide not quite large enough to preserve her dignity. A humpback witch hunched over a cauldron of her own innards, all stemming from discarded parts of living tissue from *Scorn*'s birthing wall. She's the mother of all other creatures across these pages. Wallowing in a darkened lair at the bottom of the Crater location, her job is to hemorrhage an endless surge of descendants. "Evolution is going about its own way," comments Peklar, "but the amount of material and time at its disposal is limited."

The plague of varmints displayed here represents the first ideas about what would eventually drag itself out from the piles of afterbirth beneath the Crater queen. Her gruesome discharge coalesced into different forms, entirely at random.

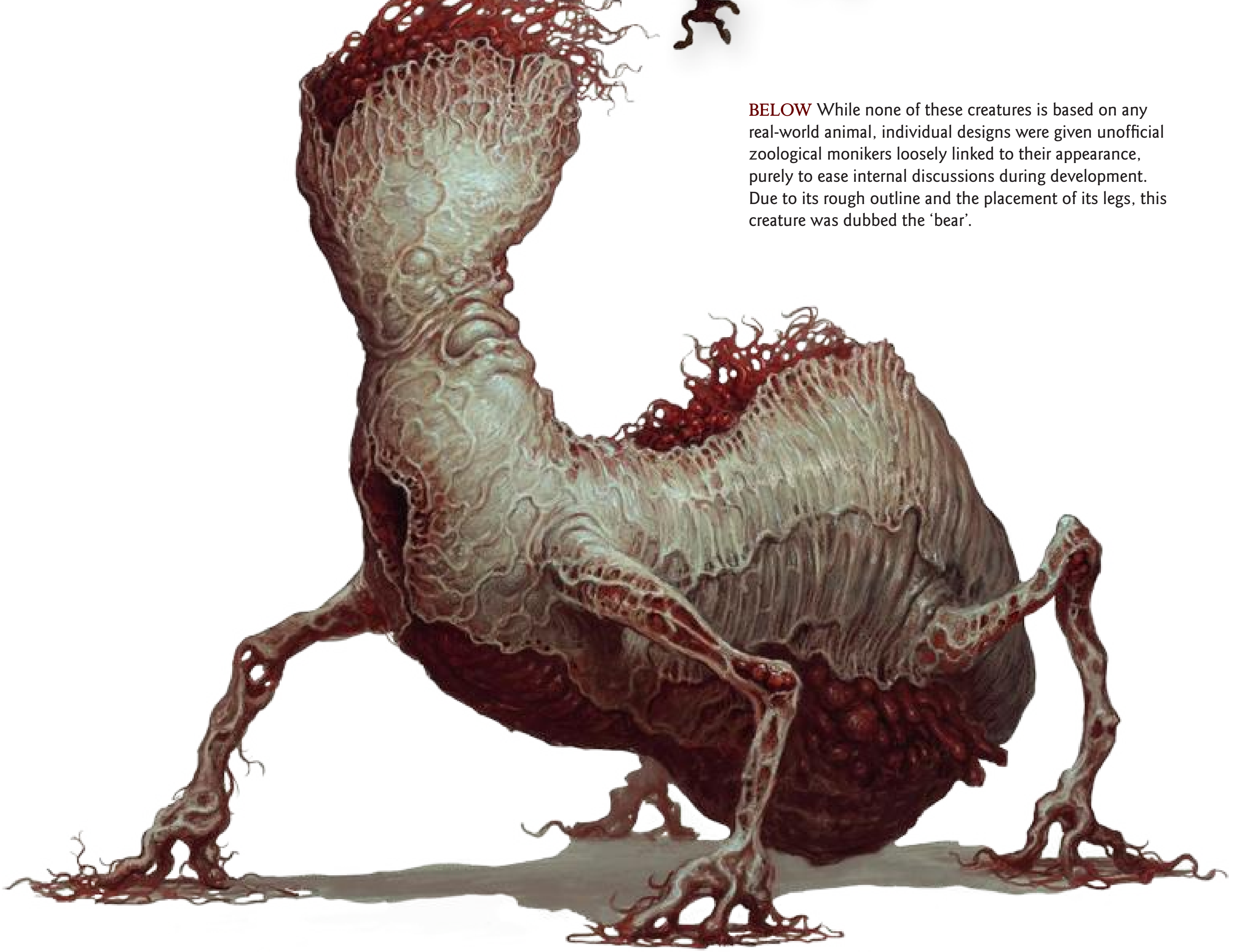


BOTTOM The monstrosity we'll call the Crater queen is the lone creature here with any discernible facial features.

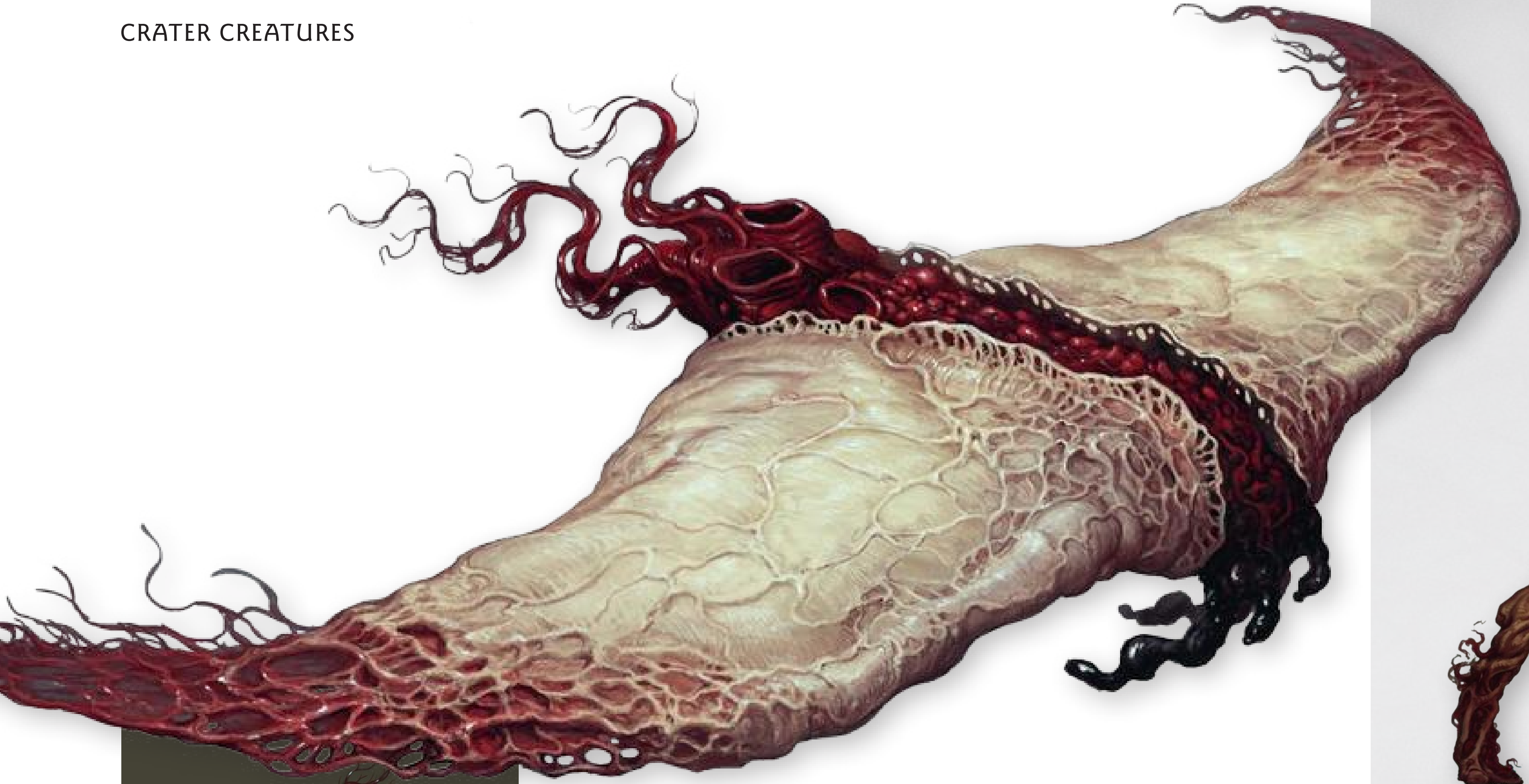


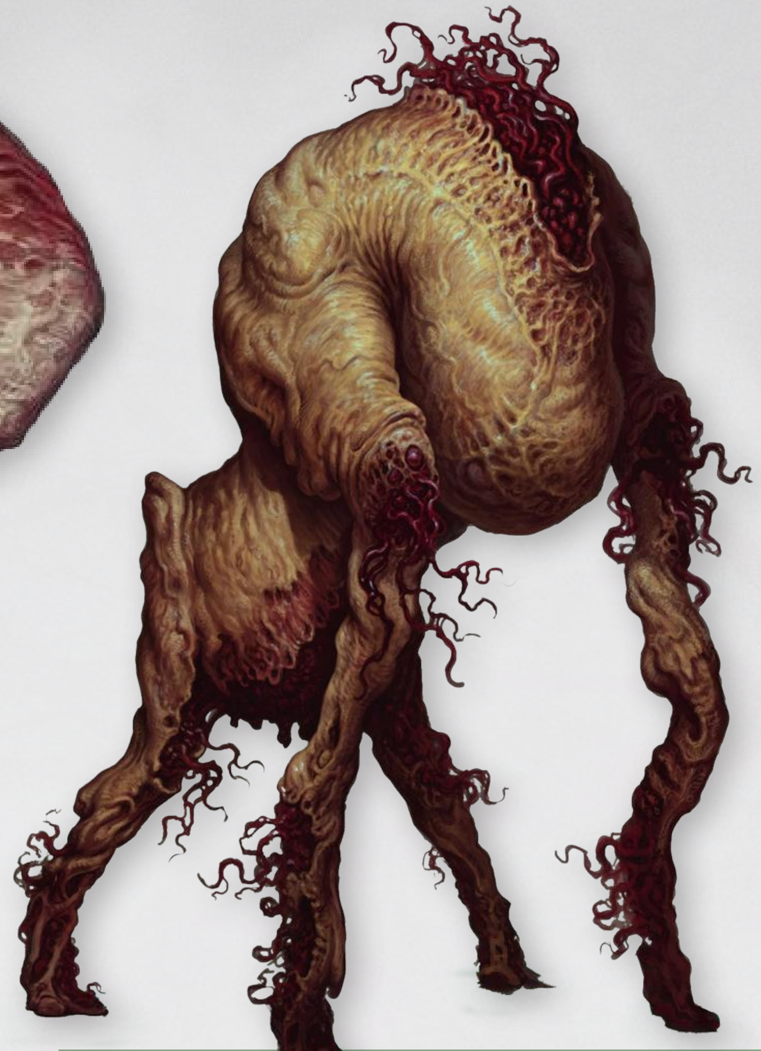


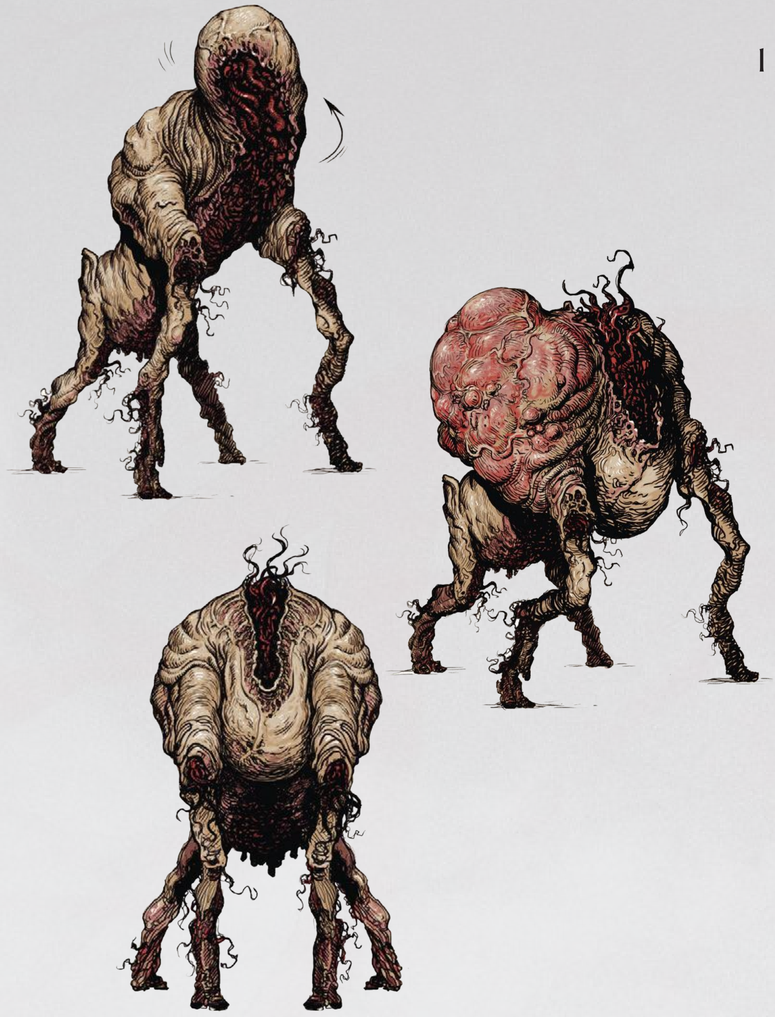
LEFT Garlands of braided limbs and bodies depict creatures cursed to exist in an inseverable prison.

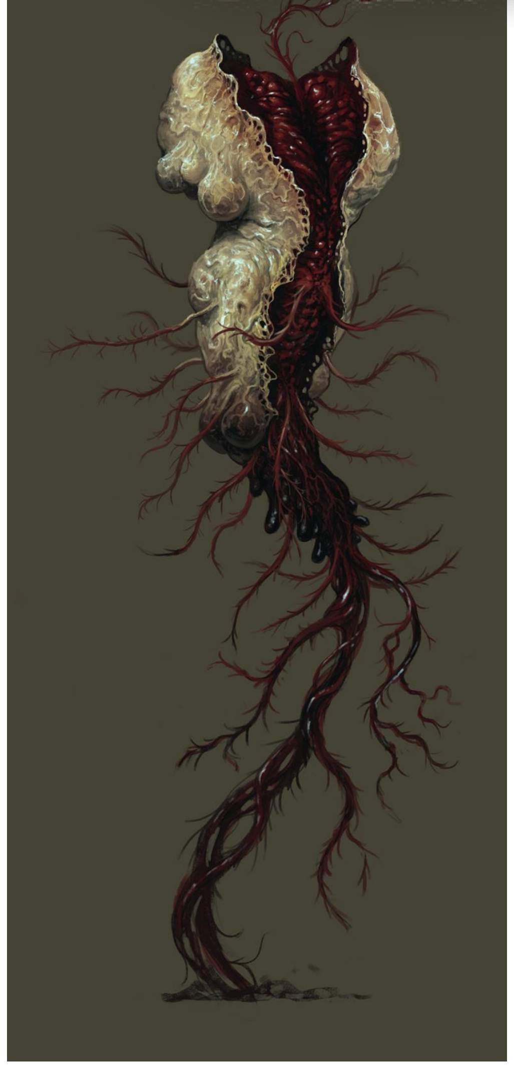


BELOW While none of these creatures is based on any real-world animal, individual designs were given unofficial zoological monikers loosely linked to their appearance, purely to ease internal discussions during development. Due to its rough outline and the placement of its legs, this creature was dubbed the 'bear'.

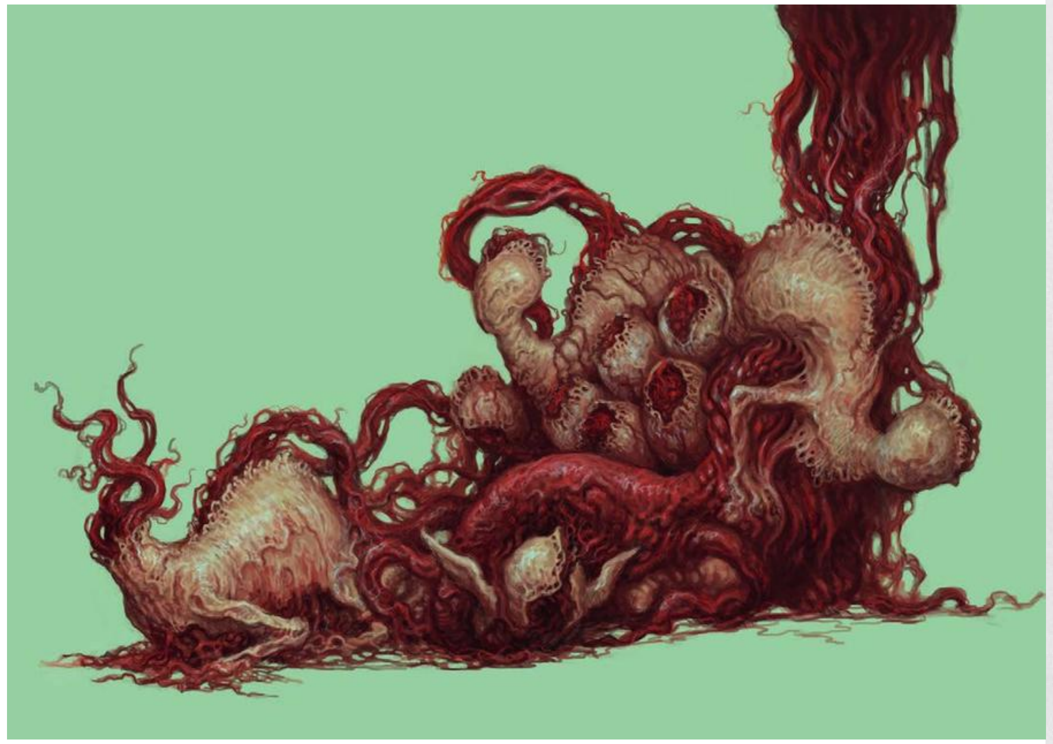


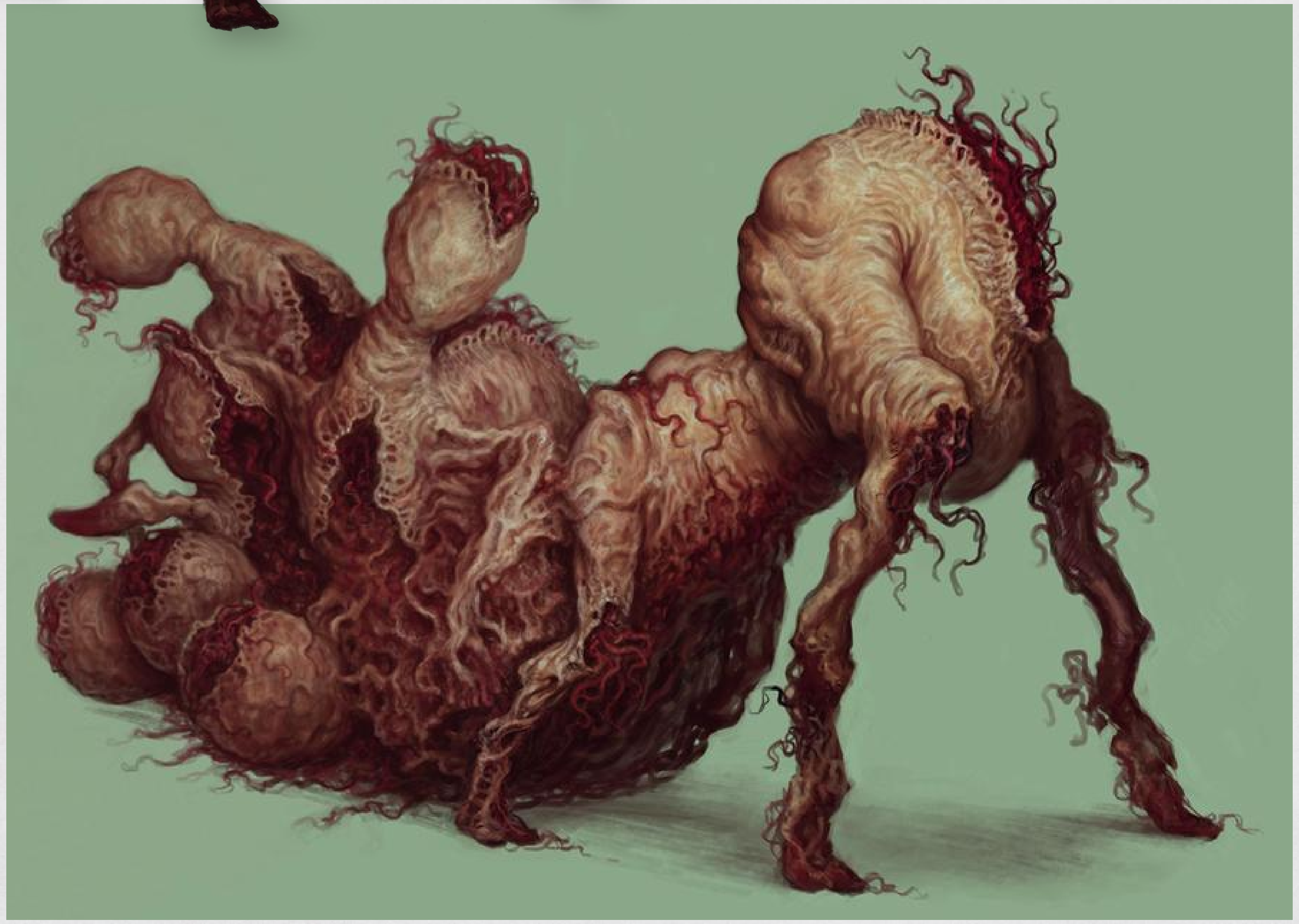


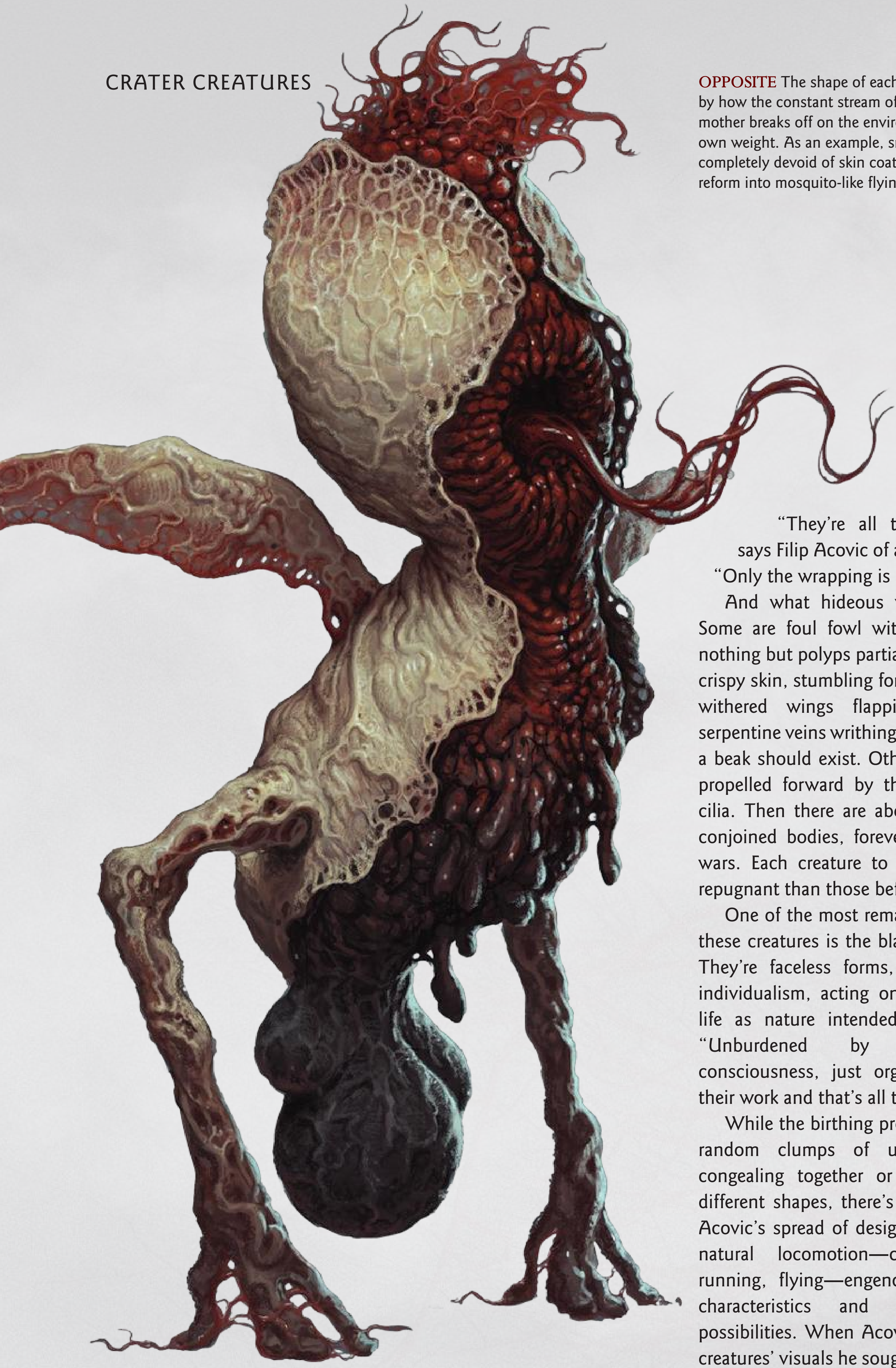




THIS SPREAD Early designs of individual and conjoined creatures experiment with different ideas about locomotion. Winged flying creatures, snaking slithering monsters, and sprinting quadrupeds all give rise to unique gameplay encounters, presenting players with a variety of challenges.







ABOVE Though its upper quadrant could easily be described as its head, and the central hole its mouth, the biology of these creatures suggests otherwise. With no brain, digestive system, or respiratory system, the functions of different body parts aren't so clear cut.

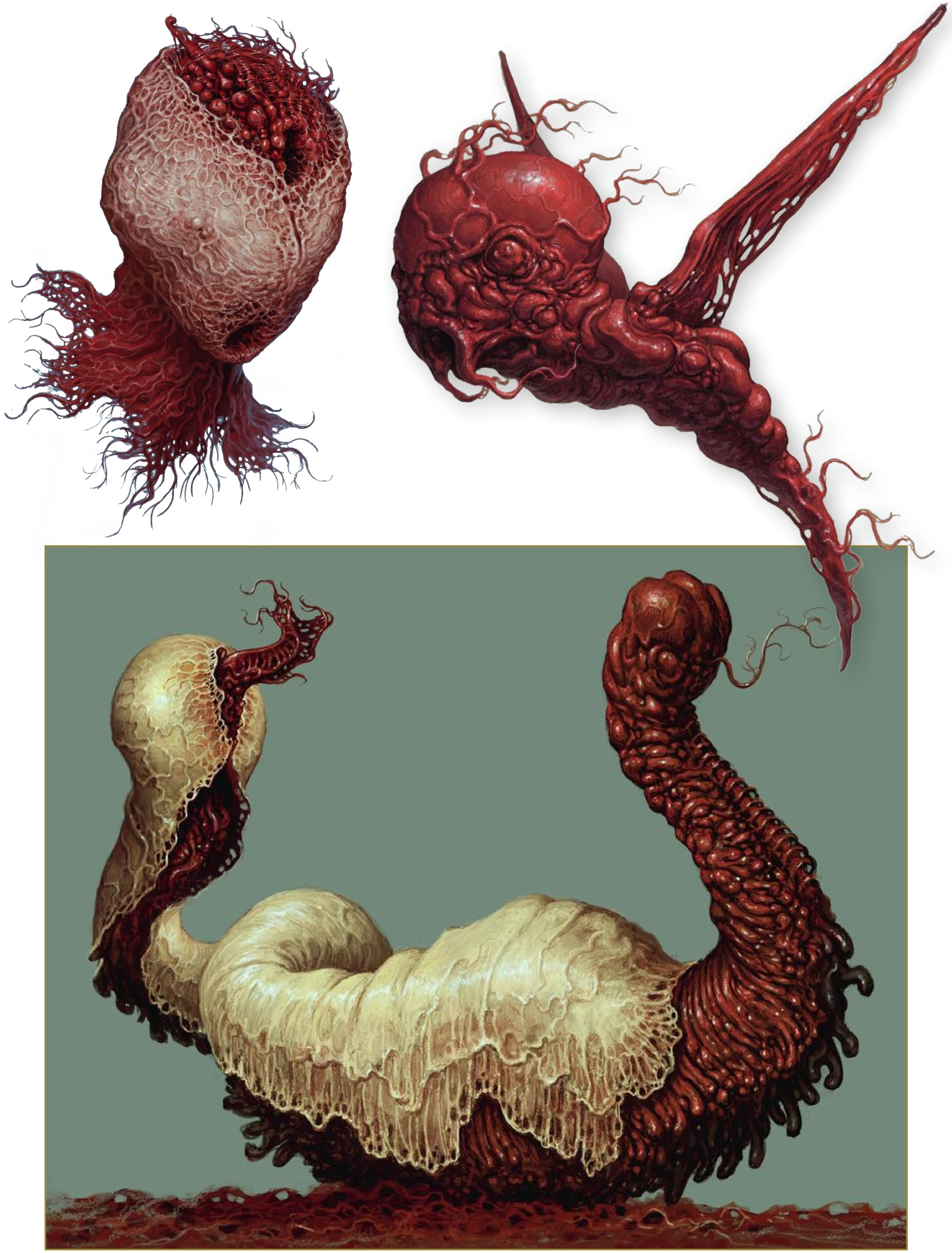
OPPOSITE The shape of each creature is informed by how the constant stream of efflux ejected from the mother breaks off on the environment and under its own weight. As an example, small muscular globules completely devoid of skin coating are more likely to reform into mosquito-like flying creatures.

"They're all the same organism," says Filip Acovic of all the creatures' flesh. "Only the wrapping is different."

And what hideous wrappings these are. Some are foul fowl with bodies made from nothing but polyps partially wrapped in baked, crispy skin, stumbling forward on gnarled legs, withered wings flapping in futility and serpentine veins writhing out of the maw where a beak should exist. Others are knotted tubes propelled forward by thousands of grasping cilia. Then there are abominable buntings of conjoined bodies, forever locked into sibling wars. Each creature to appear is even more repugnant than those before it.

One of the most remarkable features about these creatures is the blanket lack of features. They're faceless forms, tragically devoid of individualism, acting on instinct alone. "It's life as nature intended," describes Acovic. "Unburdened by personality and consciousness, just organisms going about their work and that's all there is to it."

While the birthing process is a lottery with random clumps of uniform meat either congealing together or breaking apart into different shapes, there's methodology behind Acovic's spread of designs. Different types of natural locomotion—crawling, stumbling, running, flying—engender different creature characteristics and therefore gameplay possibilities. When Acovic mapped out these creatures' visuals he sought to capture physical traits that lent themselves to different movements and animations, ensuring a wide variety of player encounter types for the creatures making the final cut.

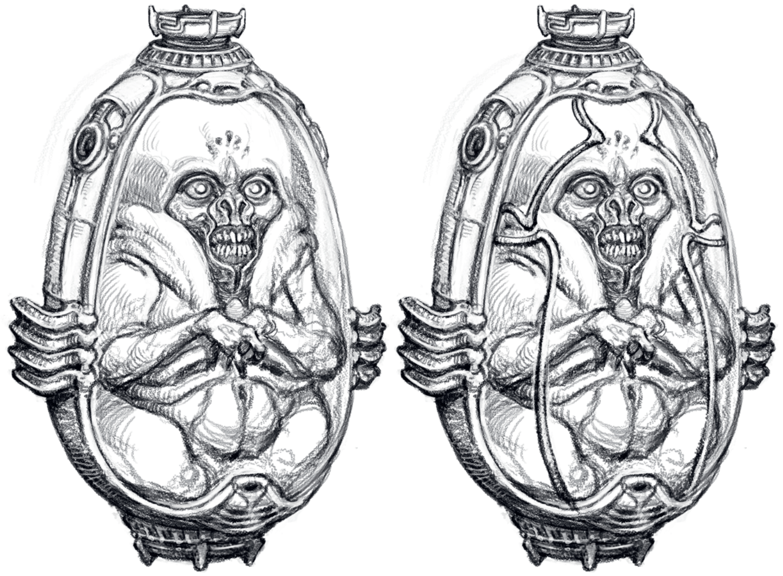


HOMUNCULI

Continuing *Scorn*'s themes of treating every lifeform as a potential resource, these creatures are artificially created homunculi born out of experimentation to seek a different kind of living substance for consumption. "They are made of a hallucinogenic matter that people use to reach higher states of consciousness," says game director Ljubomir Peklar.

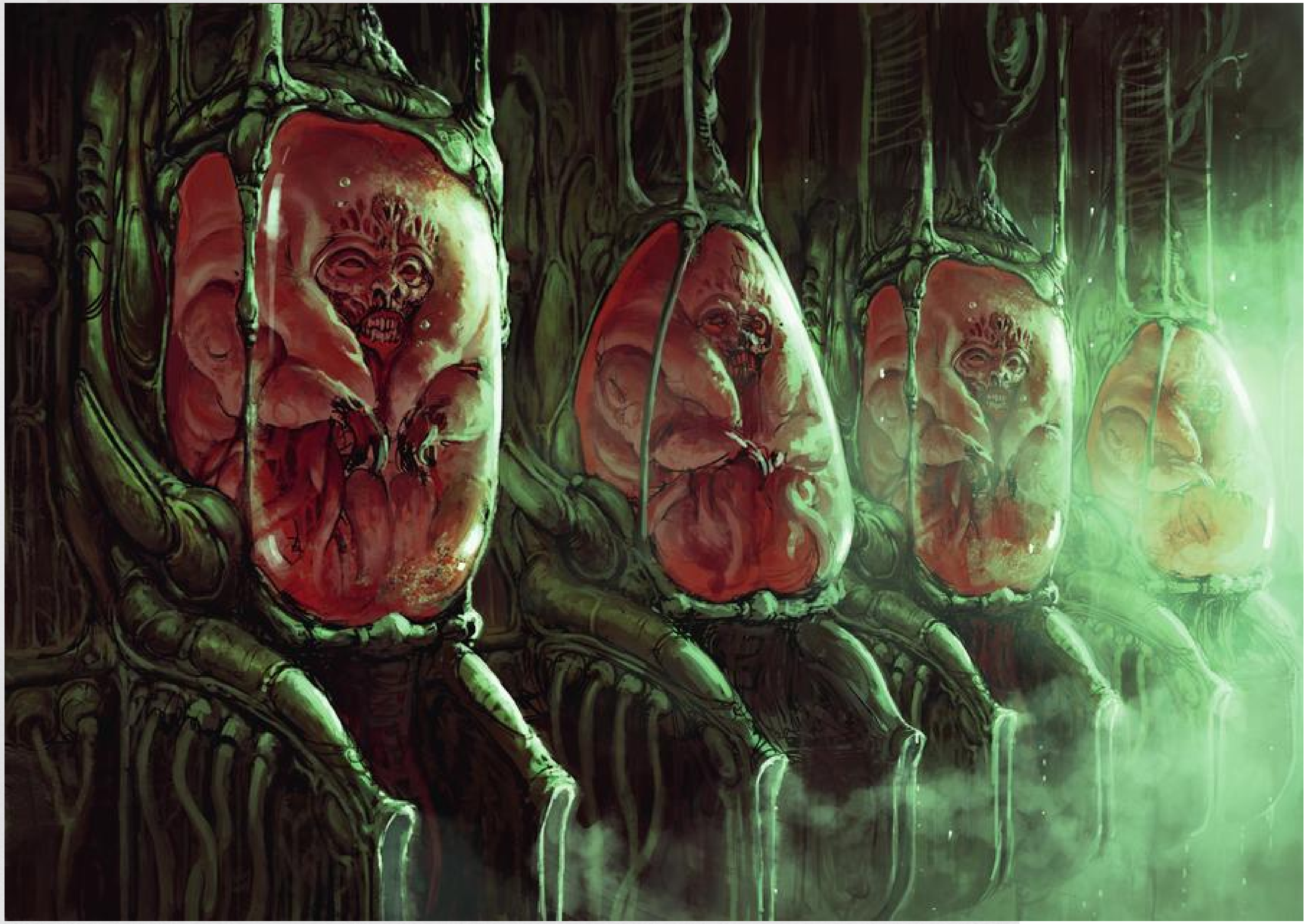
Like plucked, bleached, raw chickens with misshapen heads—lipless and red-eyed ones at that—jammed into their tops, the knee-high aberrations cut ghastly figures. "Living batteries," is how concept artist Filip Acovic describes them, but instead of coming in AA, AAA, and D variations they can be separated out by their shape.

Homunculi mature within synthetic jars, swelling in size until every available atom of space is filled. Once freed from their prisons the resulting body modification effects become

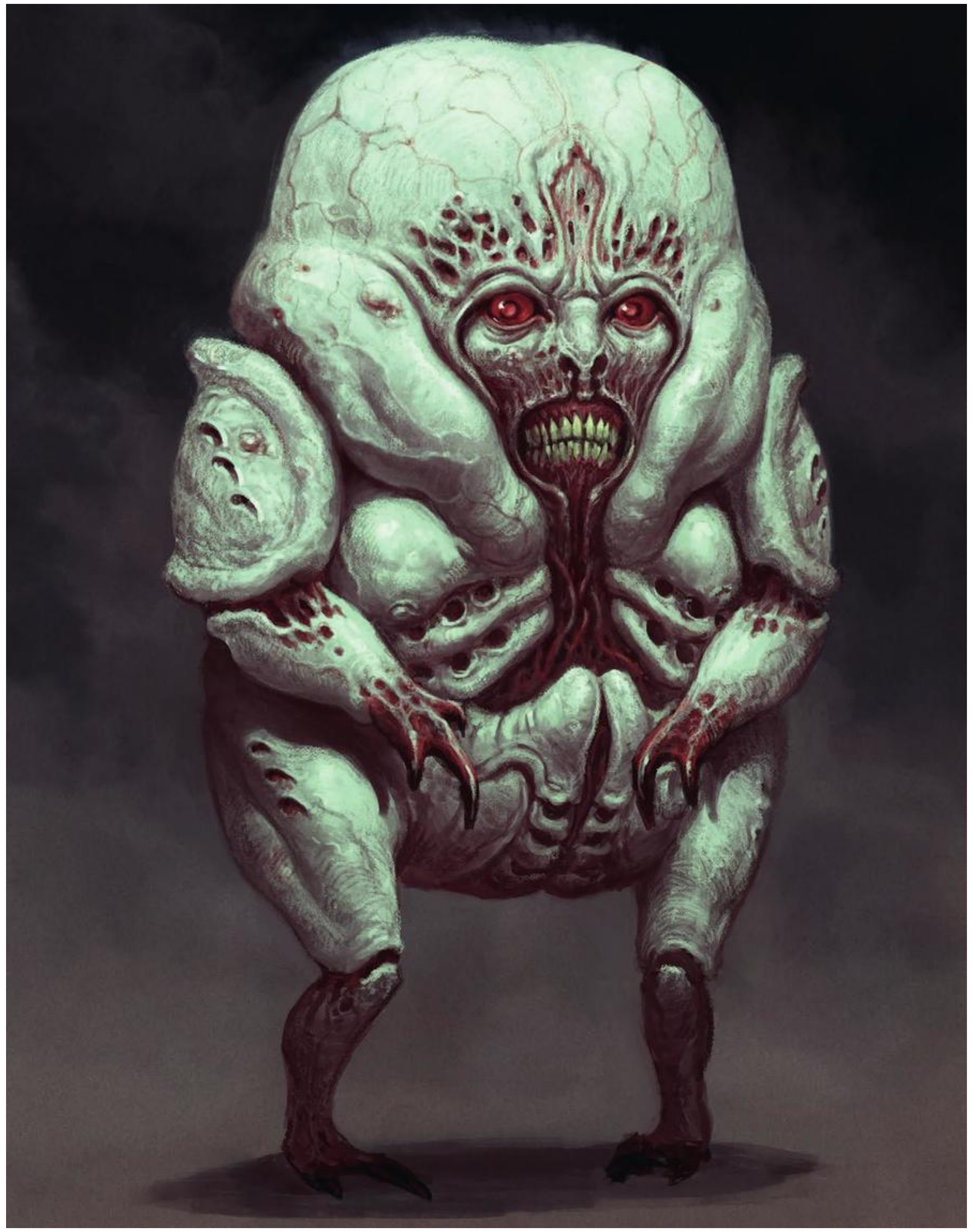


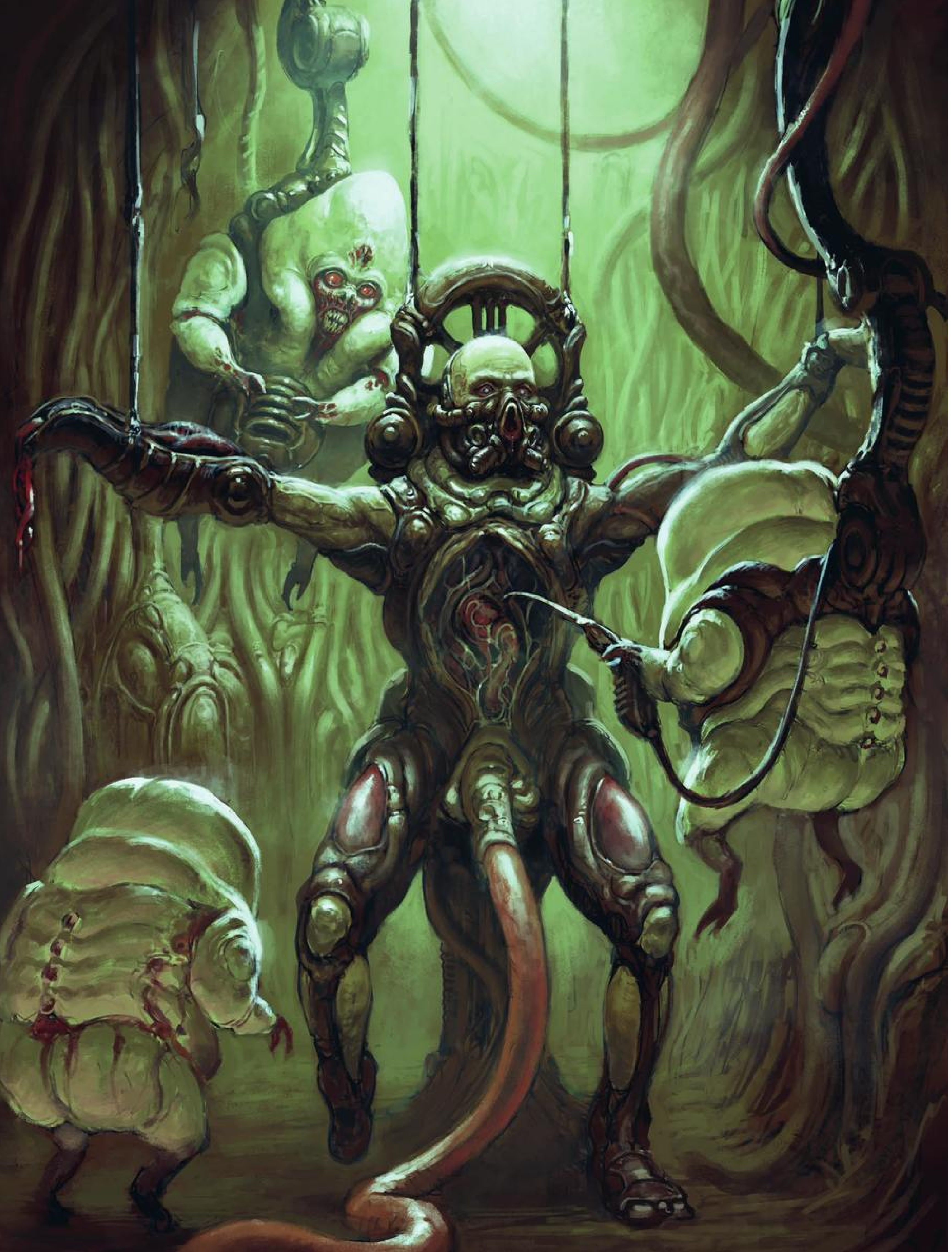
LEFT Unlike the mutated Moldmen, homunculi often boast uniform appearances. Body variations primarily stem from the shapes of the jars in which they grow.

BELOW There's an element of botany to the homunculi origins. These synthetic creatures grow within jars in rooms that feel like greenhouses.



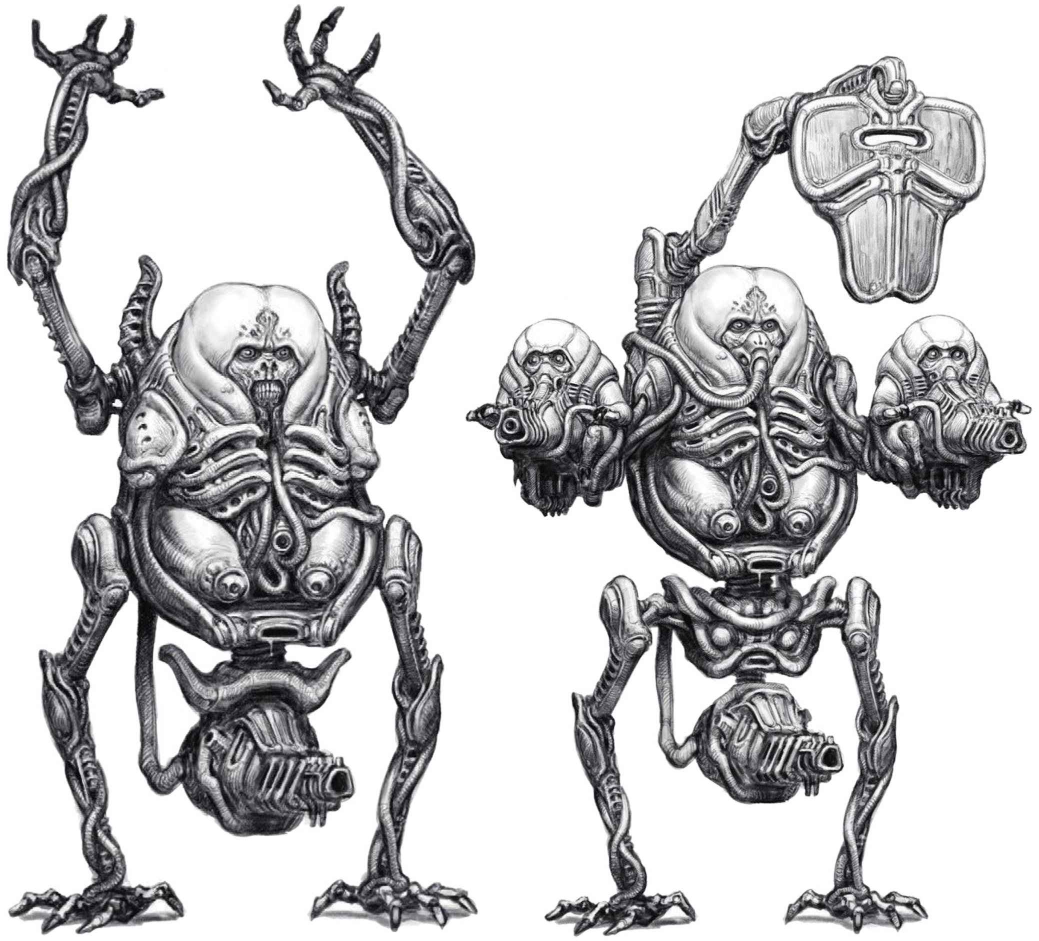
BELOW Were it not for the piercing blood-red eyes and lipless mouths, their wide bodies and skinny legs could be considered comical.





clear: Despite all sharing the same skinny legs and thickset torso profiles, they have rounded, squared or conical craniums depending on the shape of their jars.

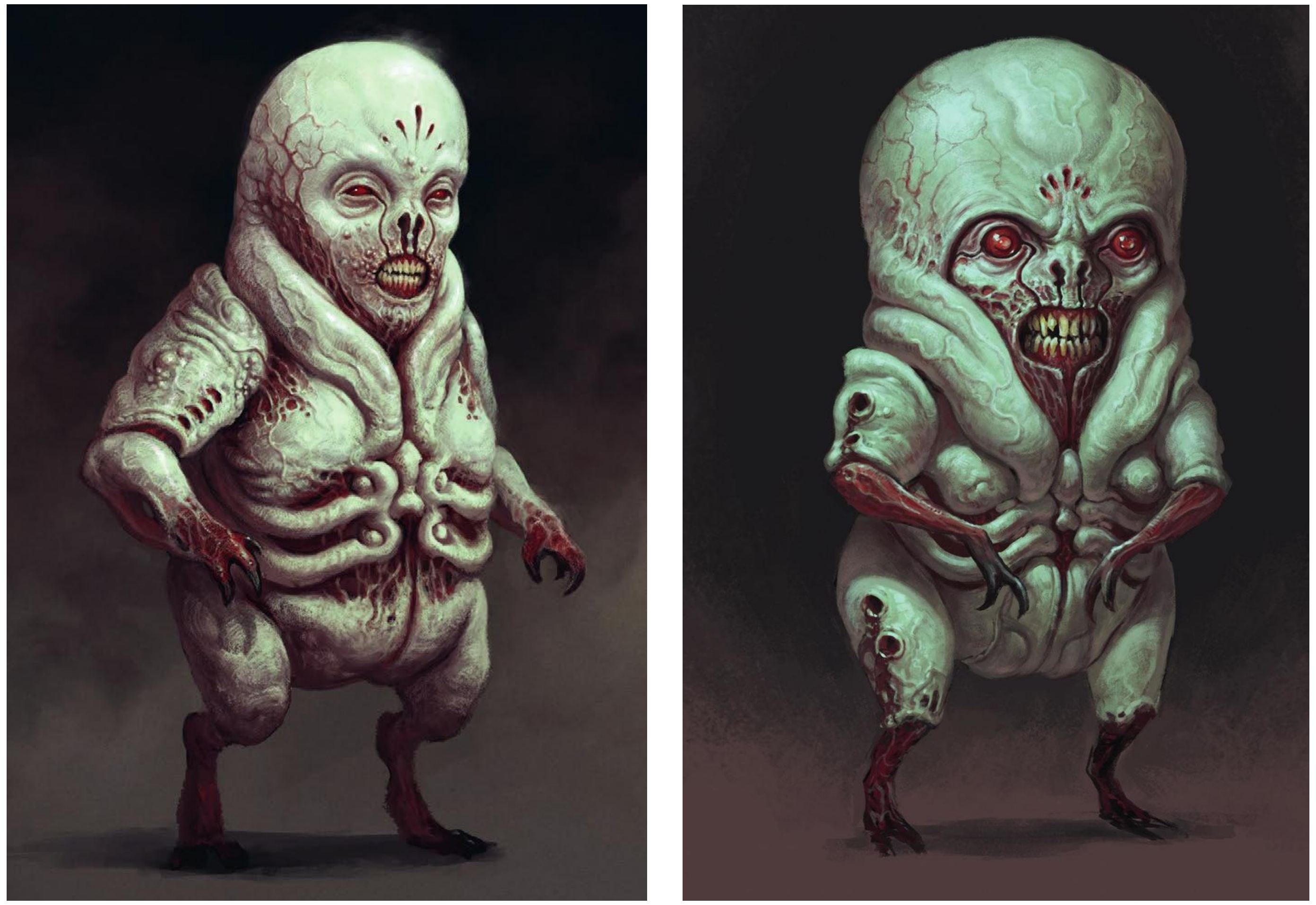
Regardless of shape they possess great intellect: Early concepts that didn't make the final game show them to be great engineers, capable of assembling cyborgs from scratch or fabricating mechanized walking gear to help mitigate their own physical limitations.



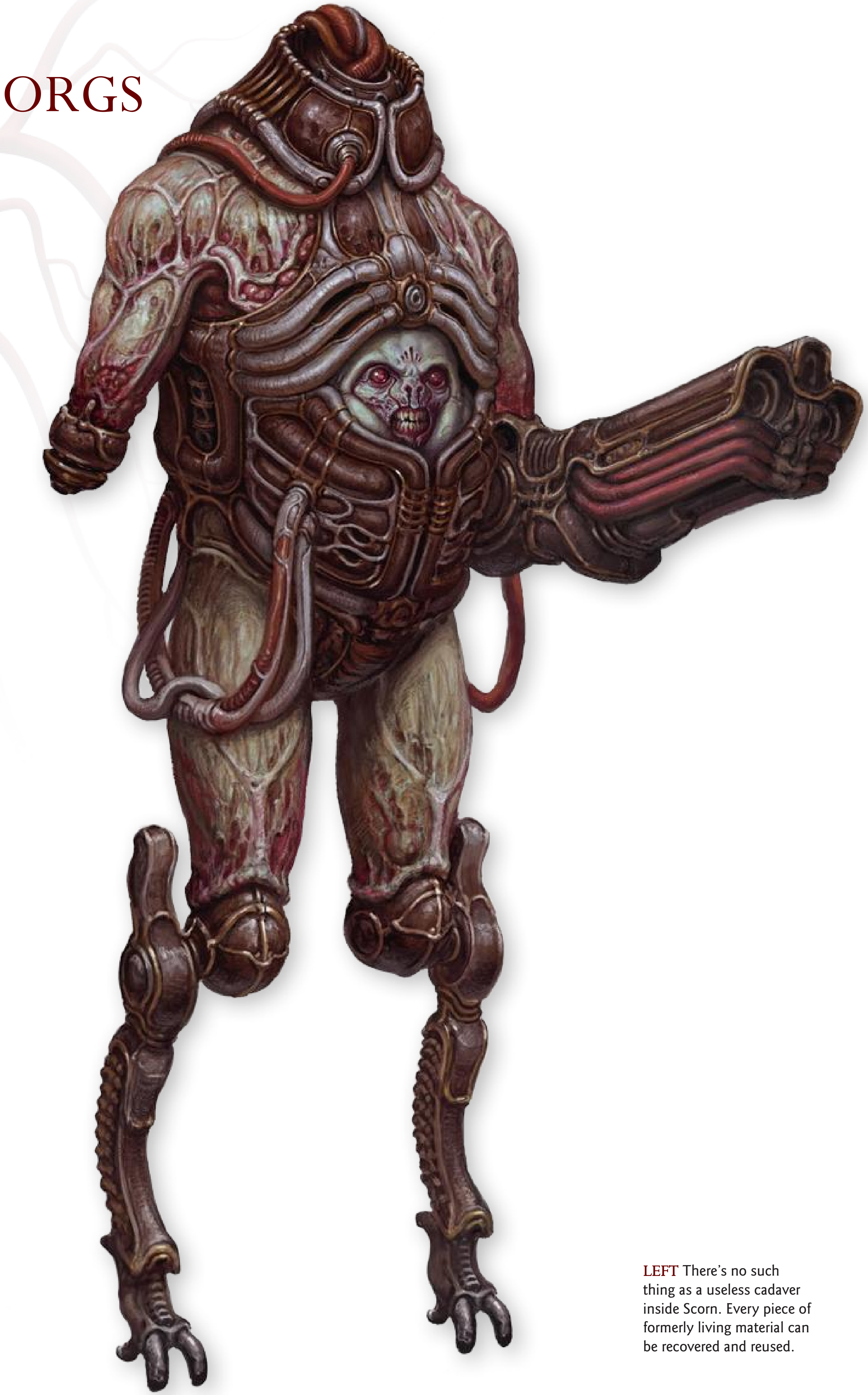
LEFT Homunculi possess unparalleled engineering skills, turning odds and ends into multi-seat vehicles of war.

OPPOSITE Three homunculi fine-tune a new cyborg, acting like car mechanics in a garage. Lifting arms are necessary tools to help the homunculi reach above the cyborg's kneecaps.

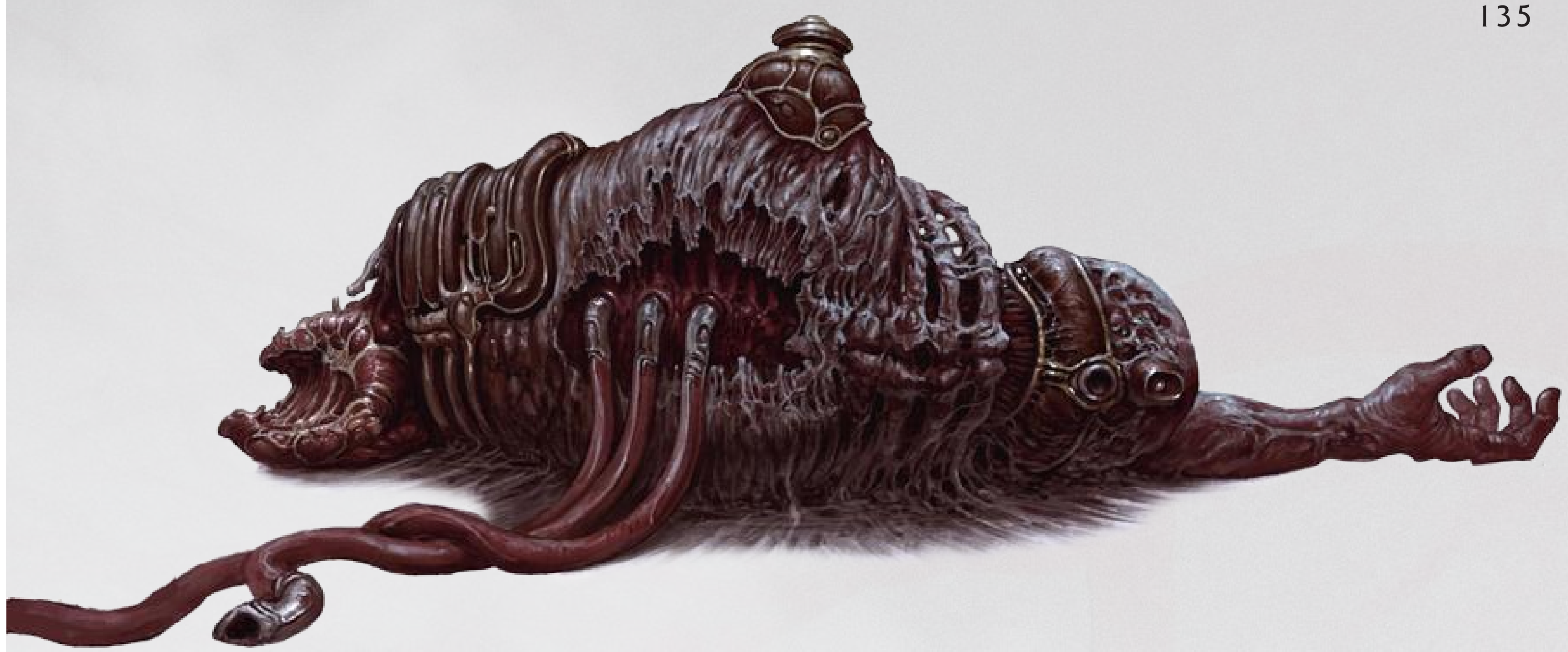
BELOW The absence of lips combined with minimal facial muscles makes it hard to get a read on any emotions. The resulting cold, inhuman expressions fit well with the idea that homunculi perform genetic experimentations alongside their engineering tasks.



CYBORGS



LEFT There's no such thing as a useless cadaver inside Scorn. Every piece of formerly living material can be recovered and reused.

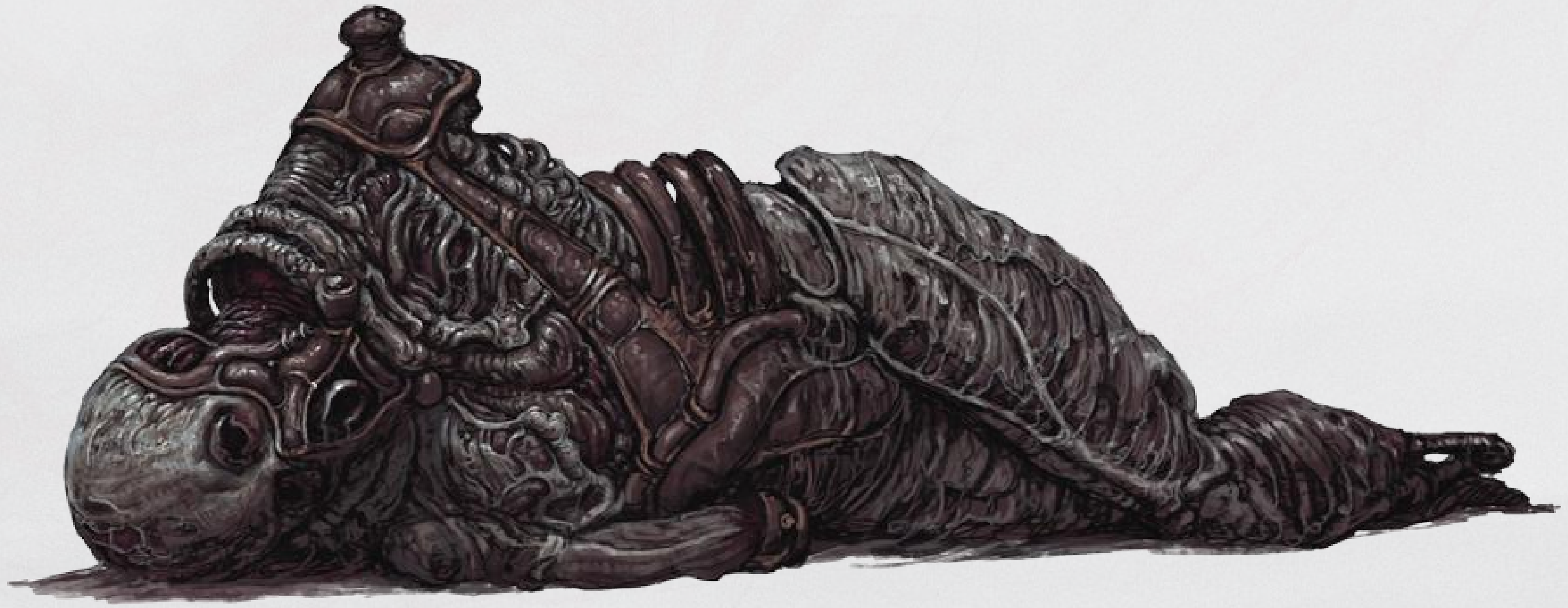


One of the toughest puzzles to unpick from a conceptual viewpoint involved defining a unique visual identity for a cyborg—a creature widely represented in other games and different forms of fiction—within a world that meshes organic and mechanical elements as part of its general identity. "Achieving that distinction and not going down the sci-fi route with a standard cyborg design was really challenging," admits concept artist Filip Acovic.

The solution involved looking back to the themes first presented in the Assembly, where players are taught that every single thing, whether living or not, can be a resource. "We envisioned cyborgs as recycled humans," says Acovic. "There is nothing sacred about the body in this society, and with no clear separation between biology and technology it is only logical for them to repurpose their dead. There's no reason to get rid of a dead body if you can find a use for it and put it to work."

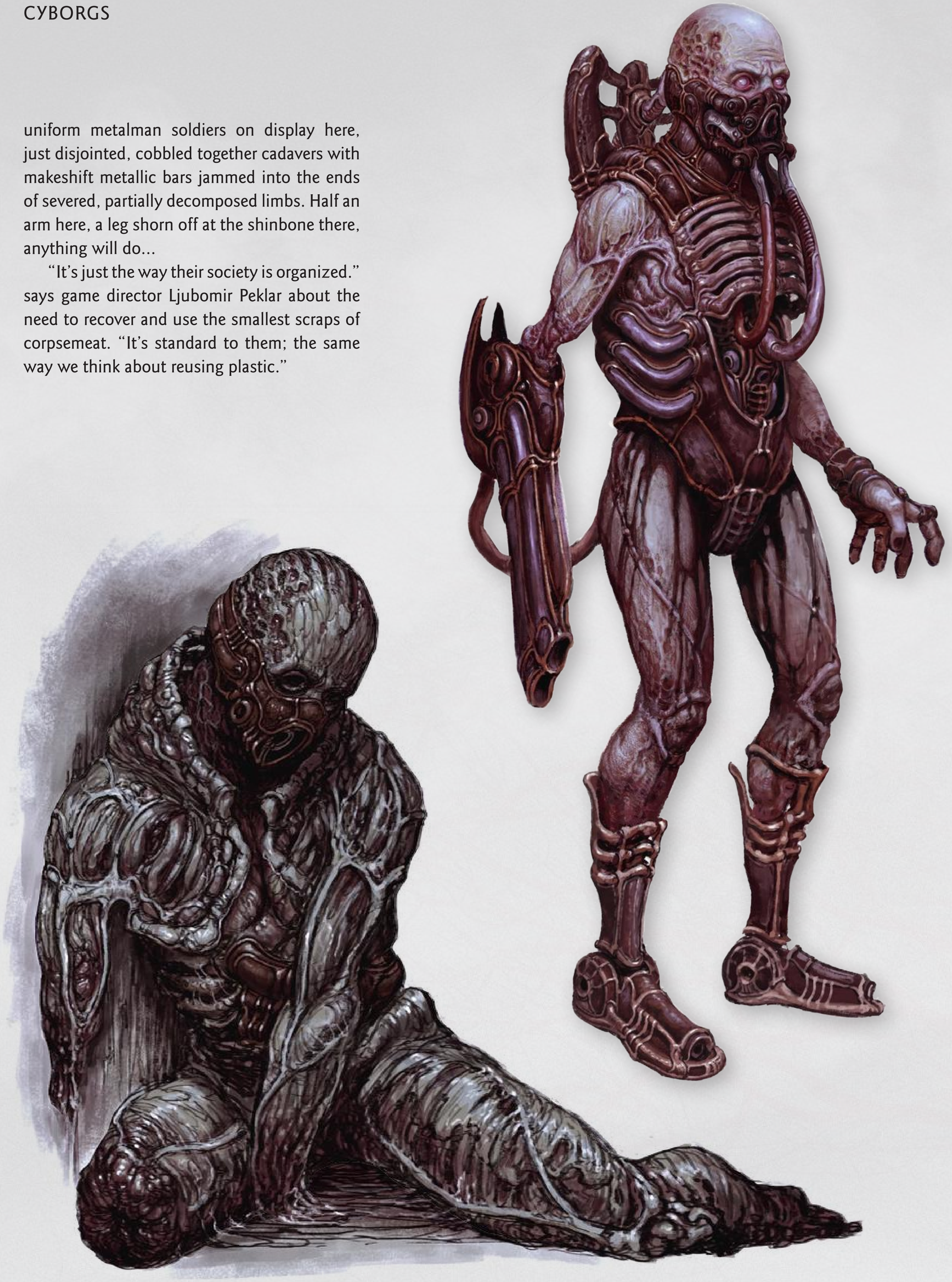
This approach is key to *Scorn*'s unique reinterpretation of the cyborg, and explains why these creatures come with a wide range of different looks. No shiny metal plates or

ABOVE AND BELOW Even severe levels of decomposition wouldn't be enough to render a body useless to the homunculi, who are masters of engineering and repairs.

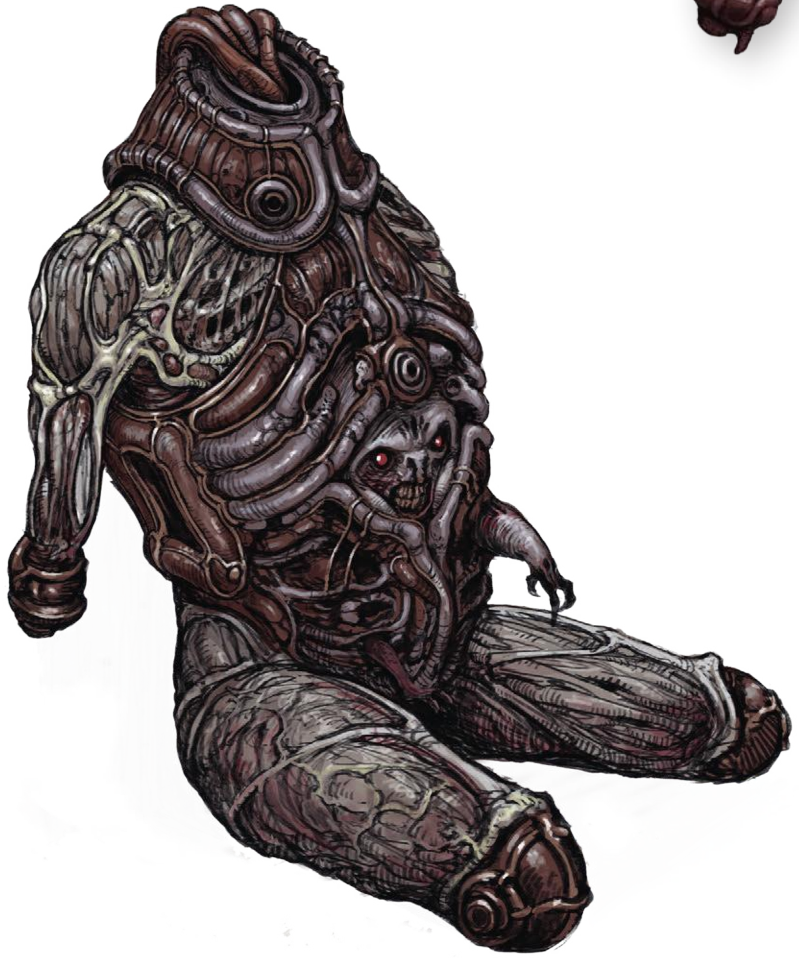


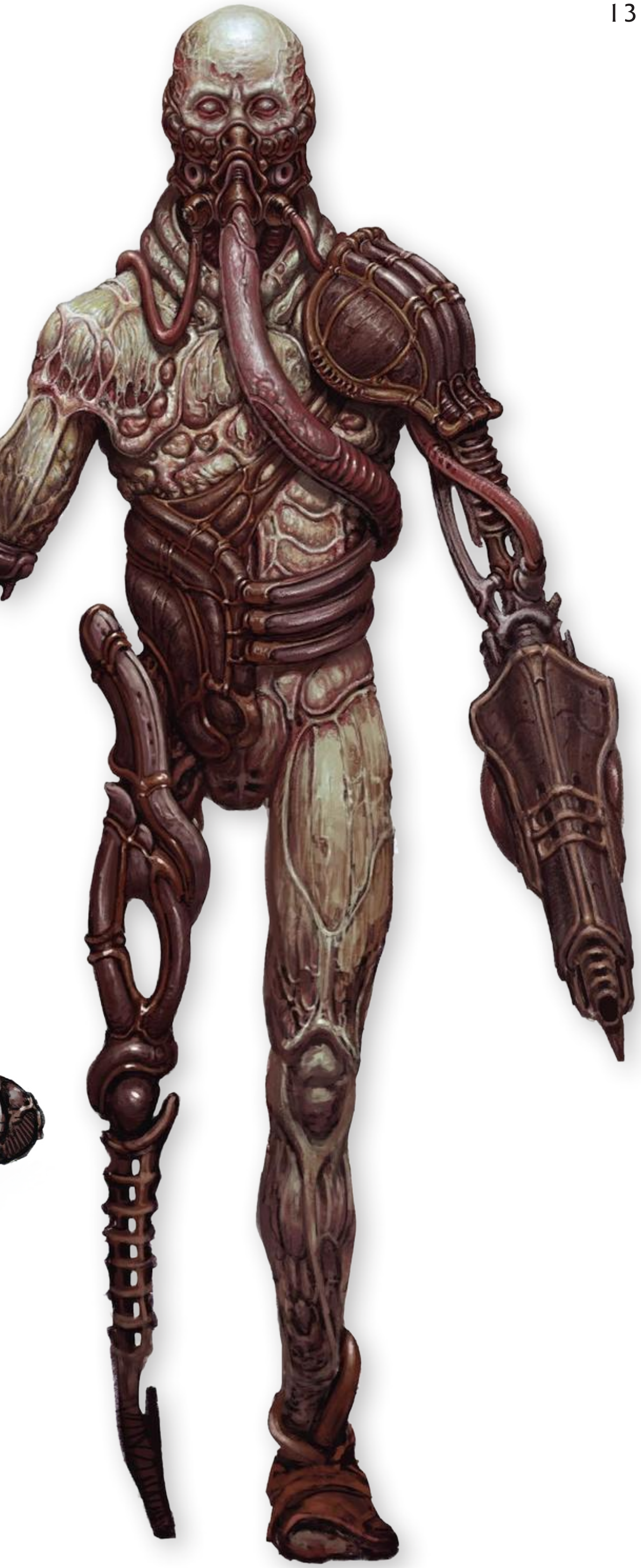
uniform metalman soldiers on display here, just disjointed, cobbled together cadavers with makeshift metallic bars jammed into the ends of severed, partially decomposed limbs. Half an arm here, a leg shorn off at the shinbone there, anything will do...

"It's just the way their society is organized." says game director Ljubomir Peklar about the need to recover and use the smallest scraps of corpsemeat. "It's standard to them; the same way we think about reusing plastic."



OPPOSITE PAGE No two cyborgs are alike. Homunculi gather up all the spare offal they can from corpses, kit-bashing together multiple bodies and replacing any missing parts, limbs or otherwise, with firearms, lances, and scavenged pieces of junk.





ABOVE While most cyborgs are self-operating machines, the homunculi repurpose headless bodies as exoskeletons. By shelling out the torso and building clamping mechanisms, a homunculus can climb inside and operate the cyborg from within.

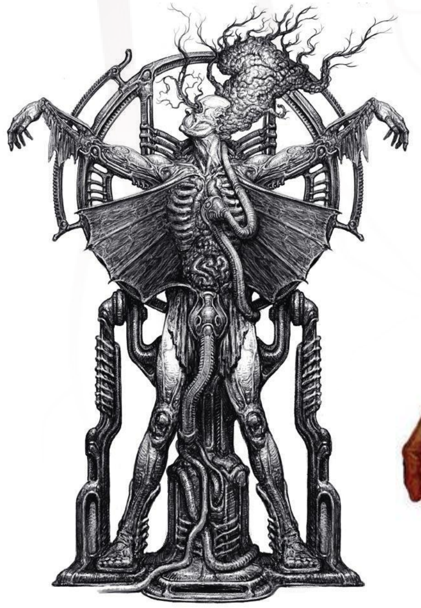
SHELLS

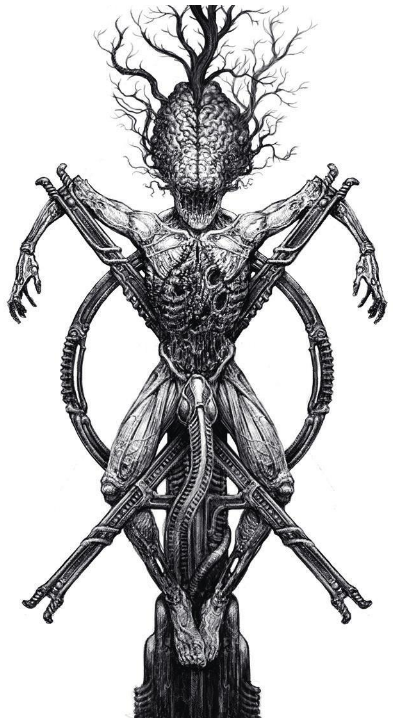
"Taking into account the idea of mind-transfer between our physical body and artificially created 'shells', we added some elements of psychedelia to these creature designs," says concept artist Filip Acovic. "I experimented with radically different forms, thinking about all the strange and interesting ways I can alter the way the player moves and experiences the world using a new body, which doesn't even have to be humanoid at all."

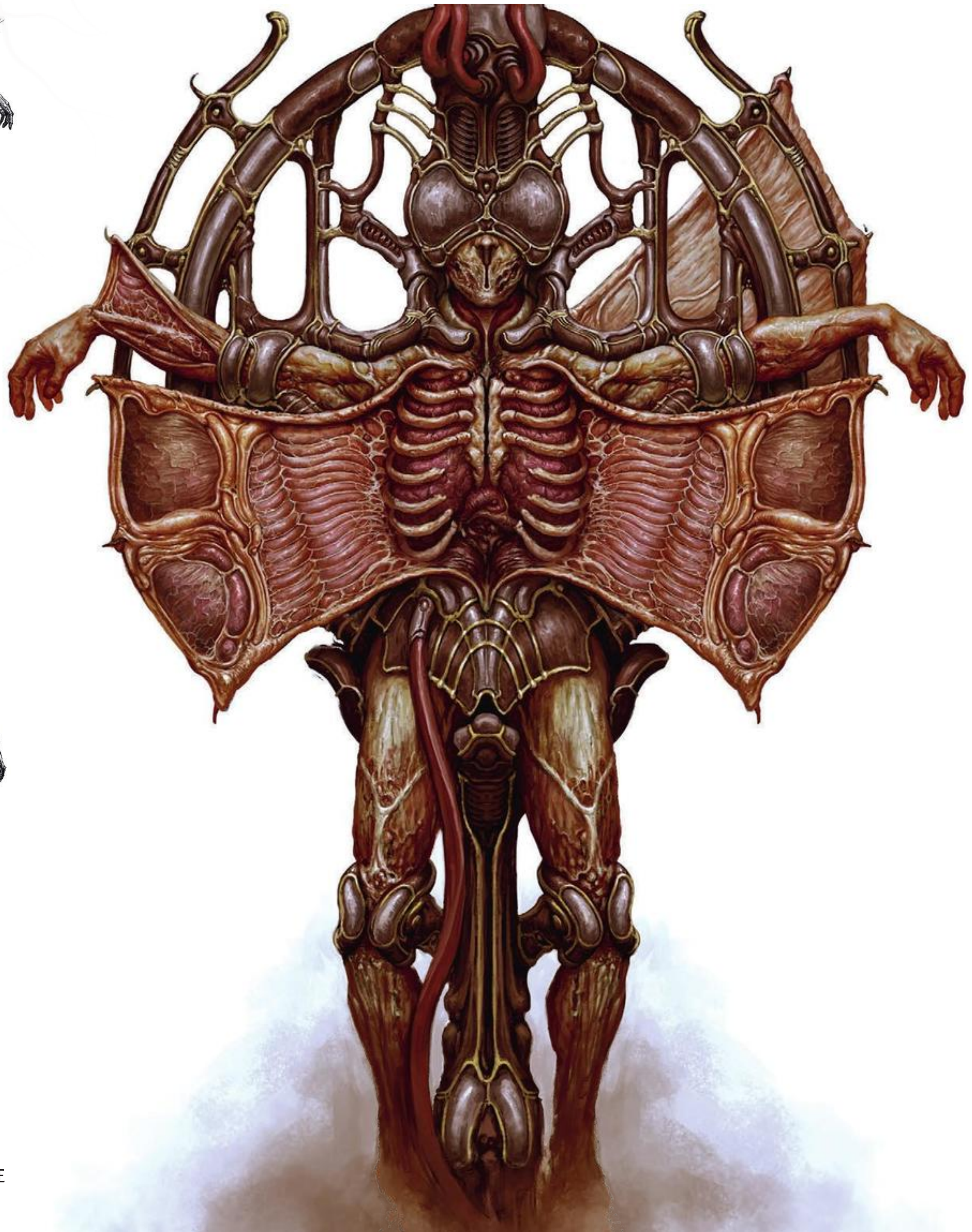
That transferal procedure first occurs with people's consciousness escaping the body and manifesting a new physical entity, a nameless creature that looks like brain and spinal column that's grown frilly wings and tentacles. H.P. Lovecraft is a go-to inspiration for many games featuring tentacled beasts, but Acovic endeavored to side-step anything Lovecraftian or related to Cthulhu as a point of reference: "We were not really thinking about cosmic horrors or deep-sea horrors, we just wanted something that looked primordial. A being which is basically formless."

This entity is then free to crawl inside empty

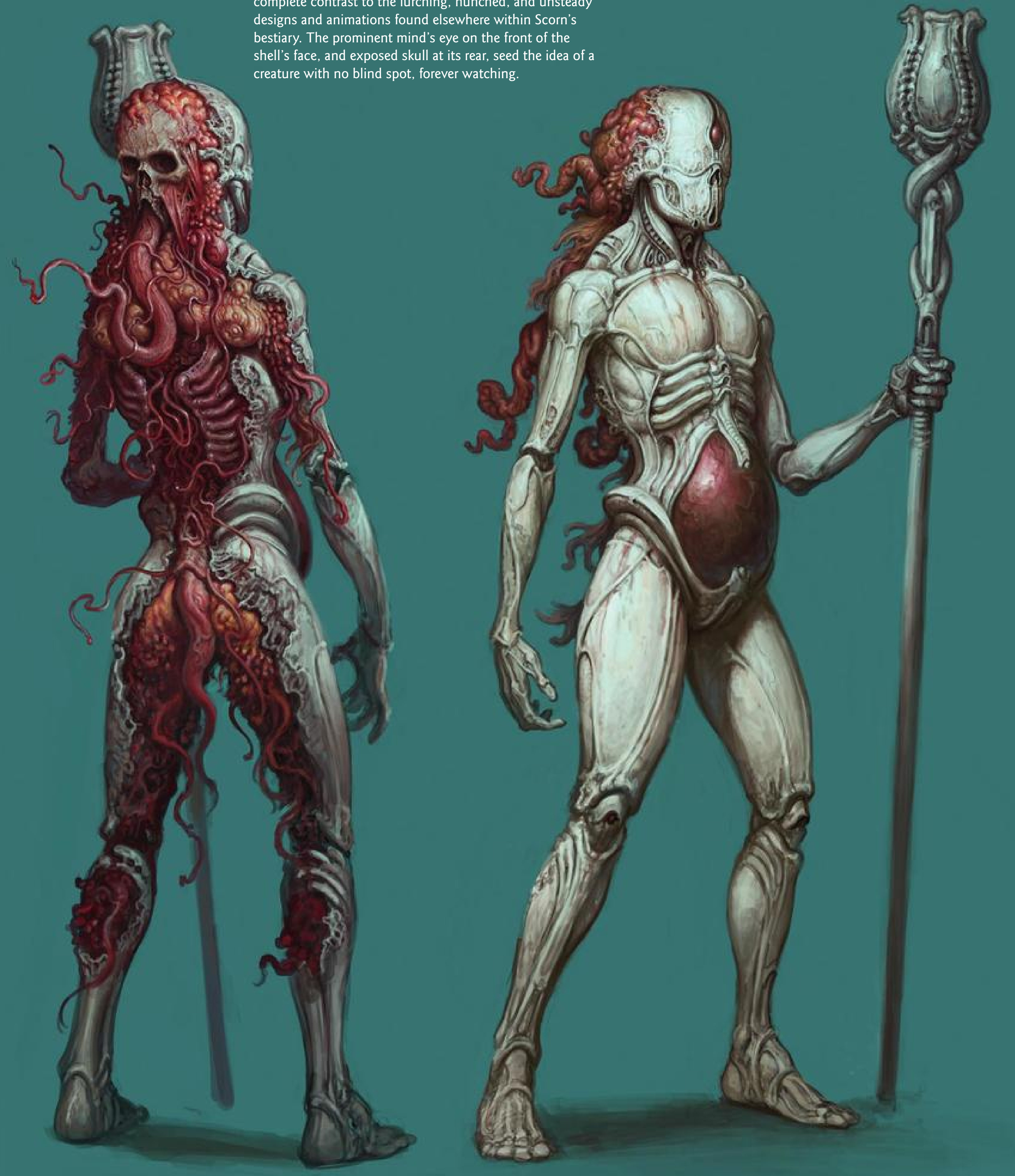
THIS PAGE Flaying machines are direct plays on Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, only here they depict the composition of characters' innards as well as their outer proportions.





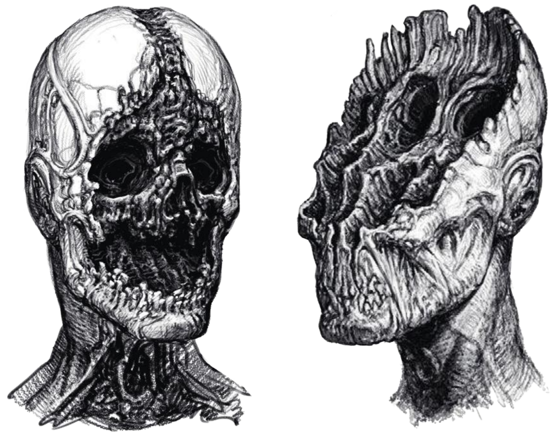


BELOW A confident, steady pose of an armed shell cuts a complete contrast to the lurching, hunched, and unsteady designs and animations found elsewhere within Scorn's bestiary. The prominent mind's eye on the front of the shell's face, and exposed skull at its rear, seed the idea of a creature with no blind spot, forever watching.

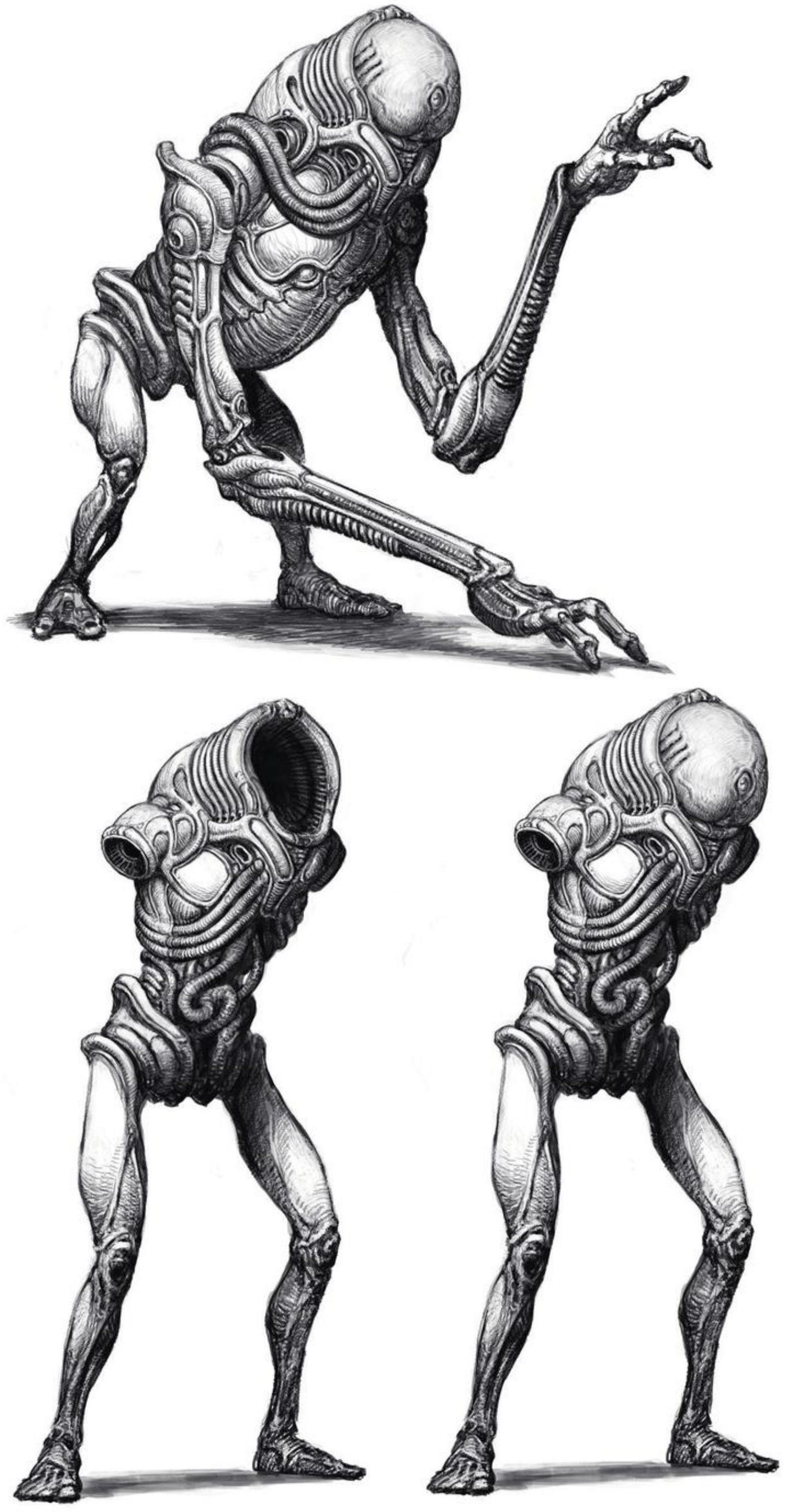


BELOW Bipedal shells with and without arms offer far more protection to consciousnesses than their discarded humanoid bodies.

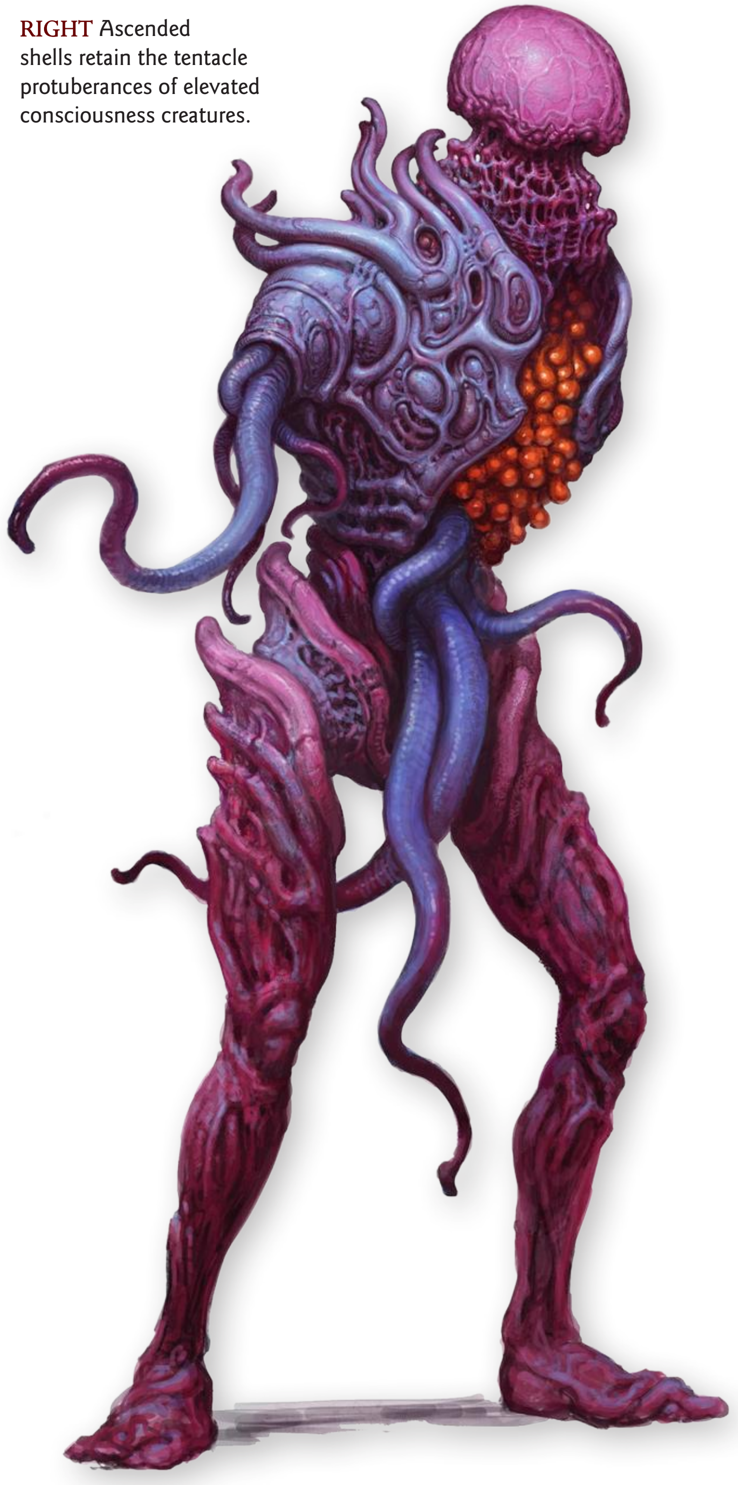
RIGHT The exodus of consciousness from humanoid bodies is devastating to the leftover husk. These concepts probe this idea, attempting to pinpoint how a body should look once the process is complete and the consciousness has evacuated.

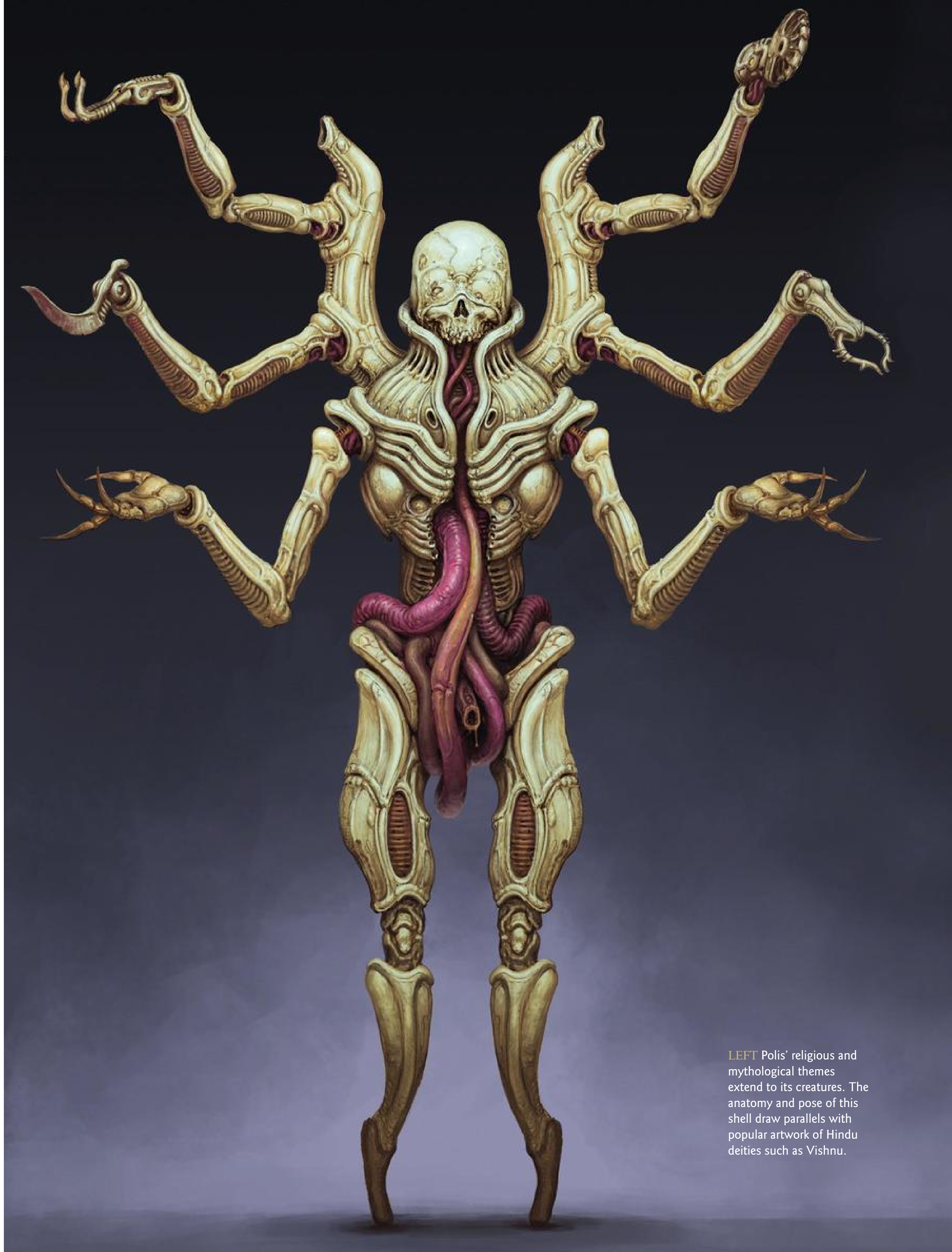


hollow shells like a hermit crab seeking a new home, with each shell promising different capabilities. Once a shell has been chosen the consciousness's next evolutionary step can begin. "Fusion happens, and you then have ascended forms which are in these psychedelic colors: lots of purples, pinks and blues," says Acovic. "These forms are the final stage."

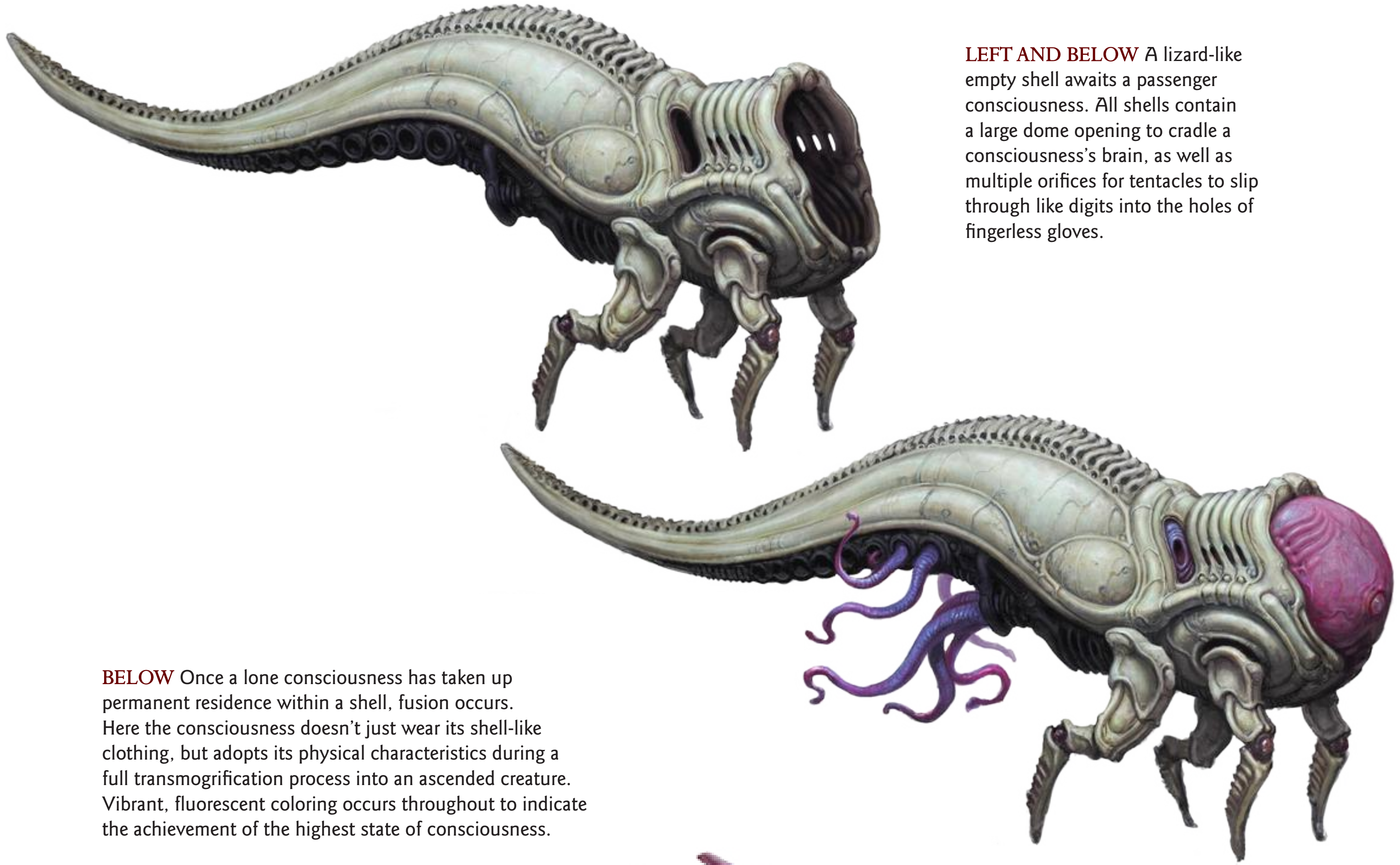


RIGHT Ascended shells retain the tentacle protuberances of elevated consciousness creatures.



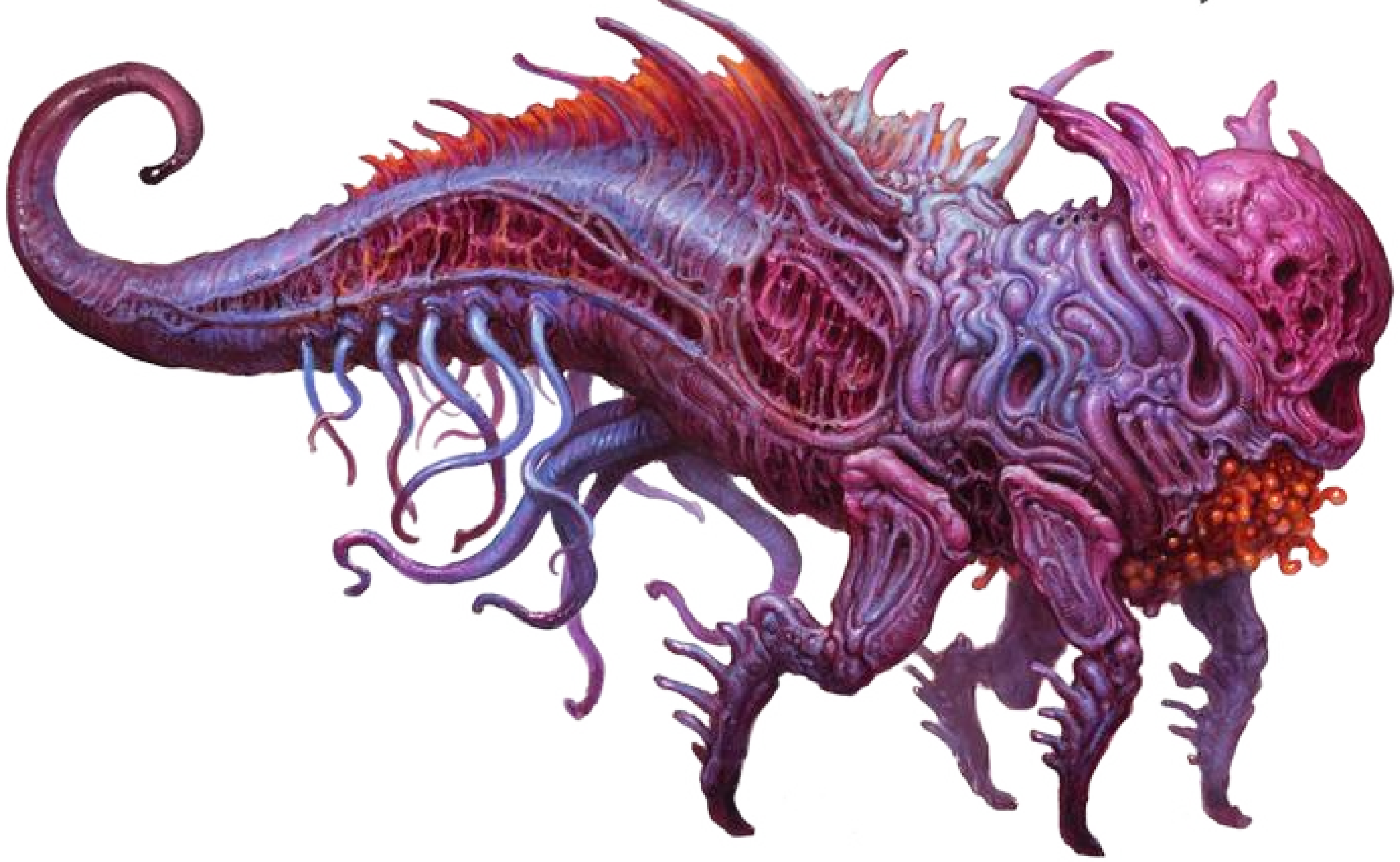


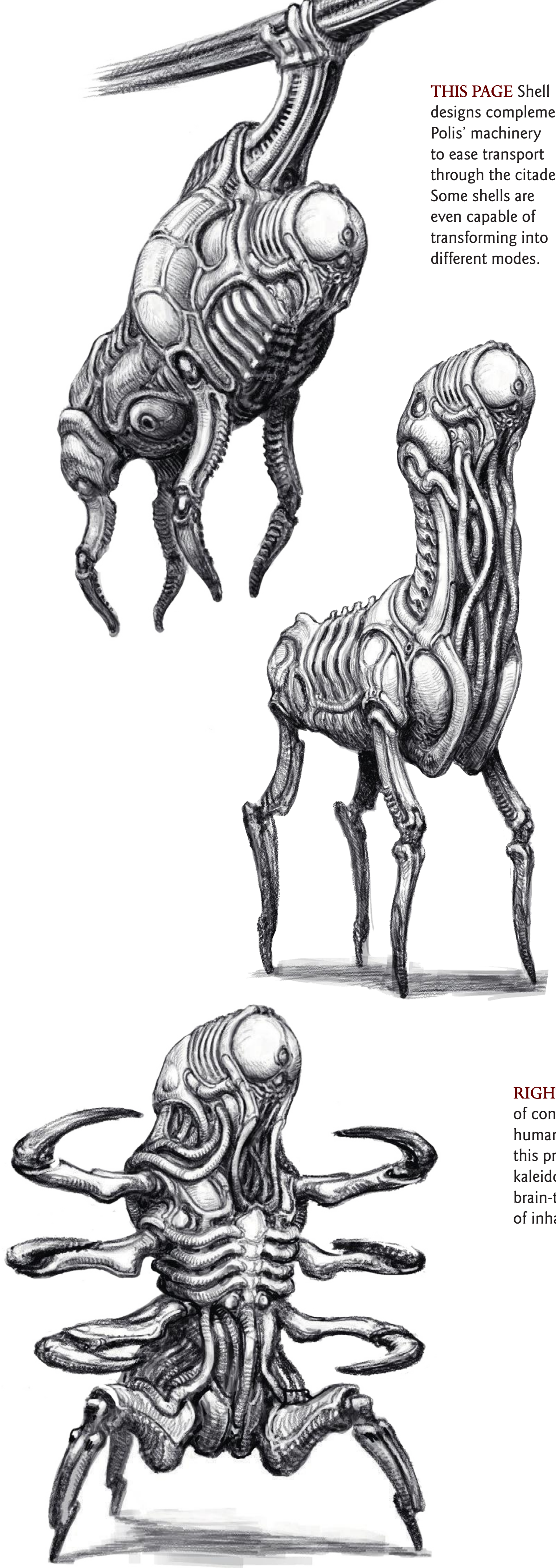
LEFT Polis' religious and mythological themes extend to its creatures. The anatomy and pose of this shell draw parallels with popular artwork of Hindu deities such as Vishnu.

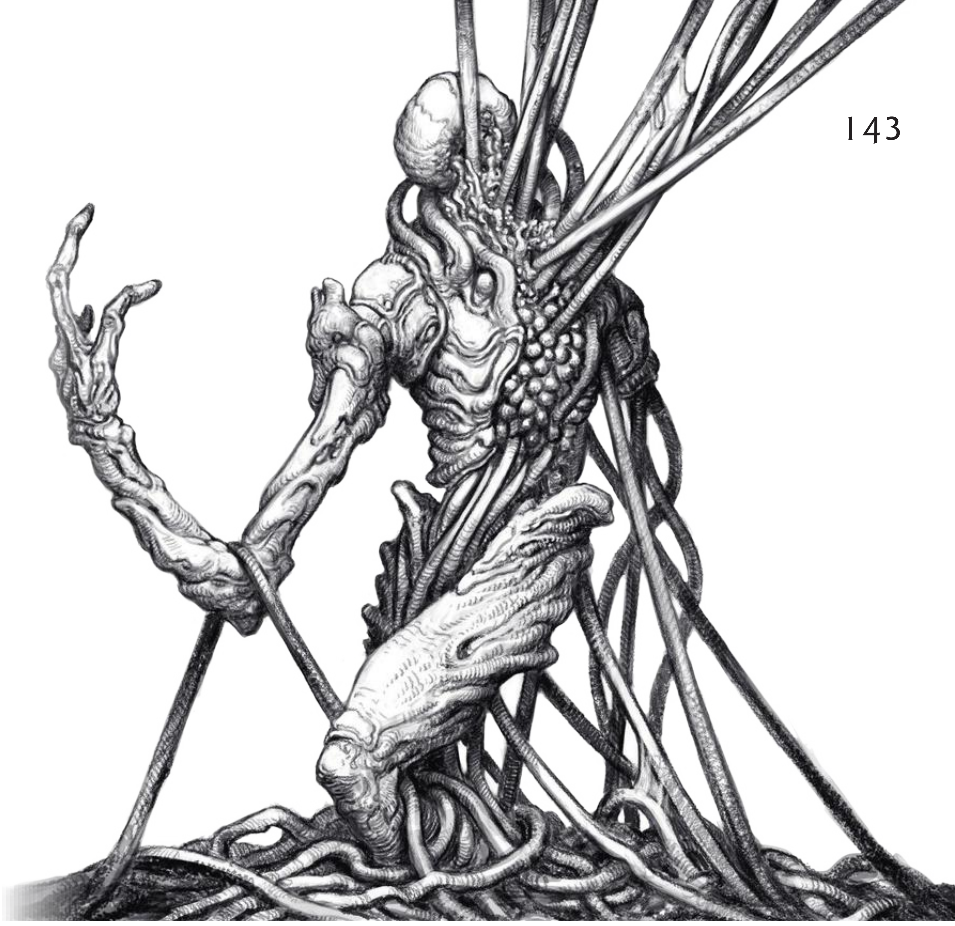


LEFT AND BELOW A lizard-like empty shell awaits a passenger consciousness. All shells contain a large dome opening to cradle a consciousness's brain, as well as multiple orifices for tentacles to slip through like digits into the holes of fingerless gloves.

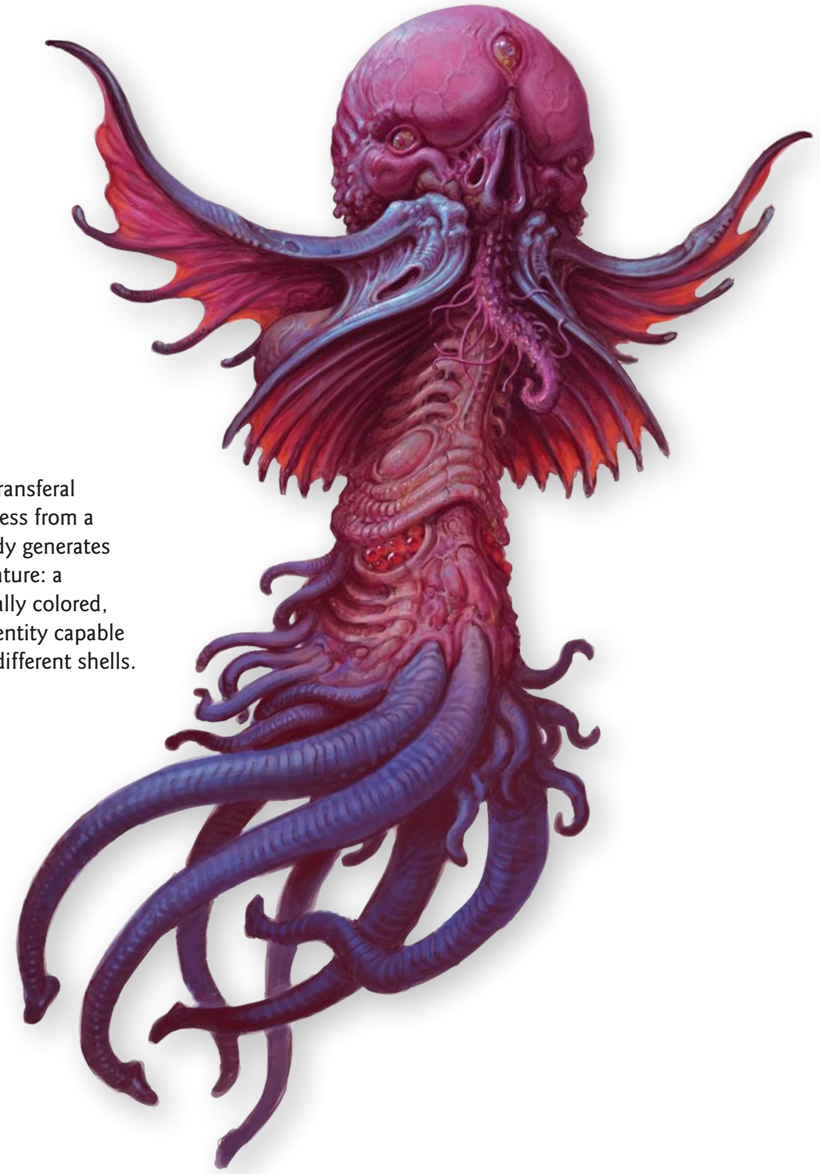
BELOW Once a lone consciousness has taken up permanent residence within a shell, fusion occurs. Here the consciousness doesn't just wear its shell-like clothing, but adopts its physical characteristics during a full transmogrification process into an ascended creature. Vibrant, fluorescent coloring occurs throughout to indicate the achievement of the highest state of consciousness.





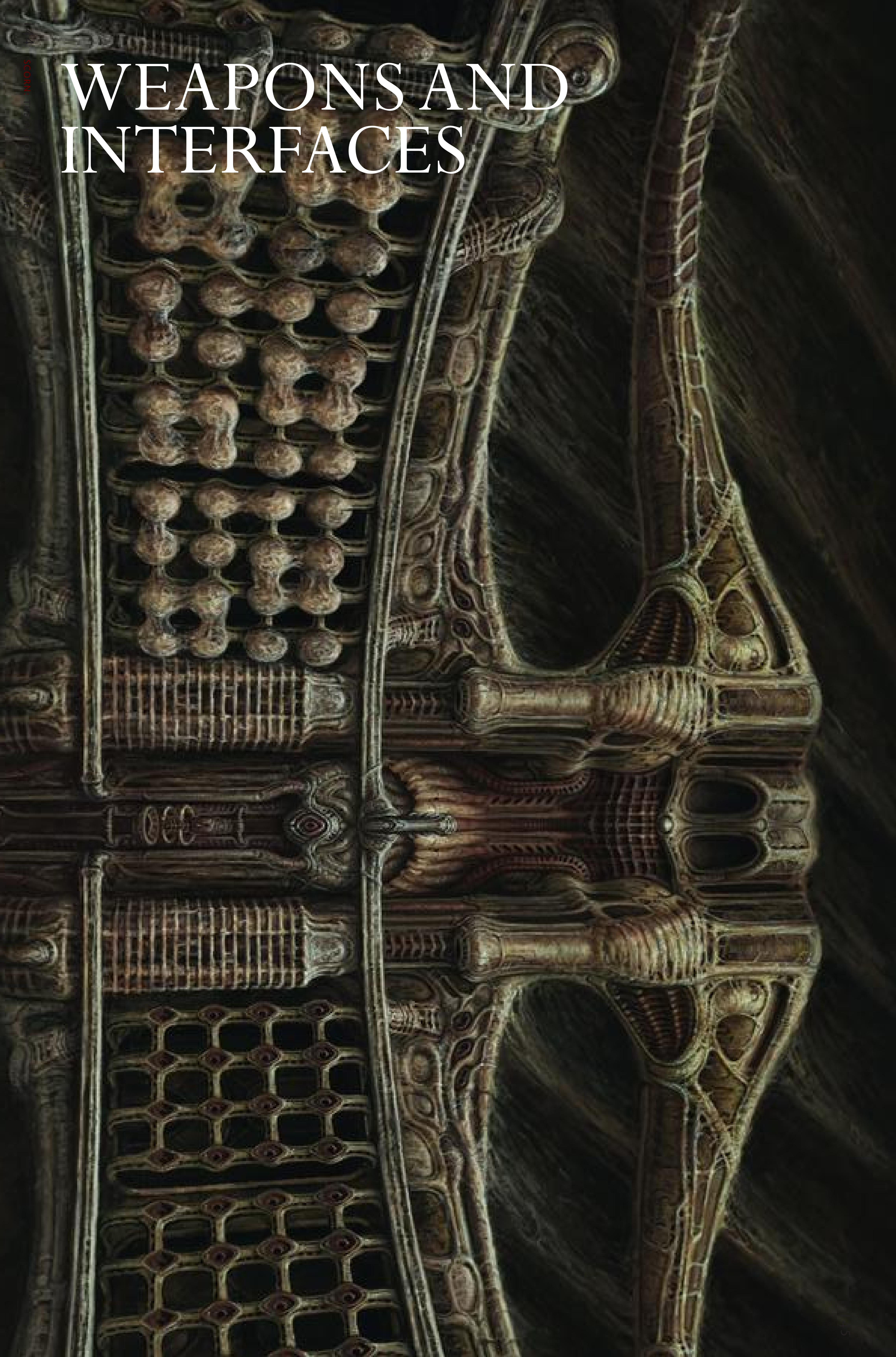


THIS PAGE Shell designs complement Polis' machinery to ease transport through the citadel. Some shells are even capable of transforming into different modes.



RIGHT The transferal of consciousness from a humanoid body generates this proto-creature: a kaleidoscopically colored, brain-topped entity capable of inhabiting different shells.

WEAPONS AND INTERFACES



GUNS

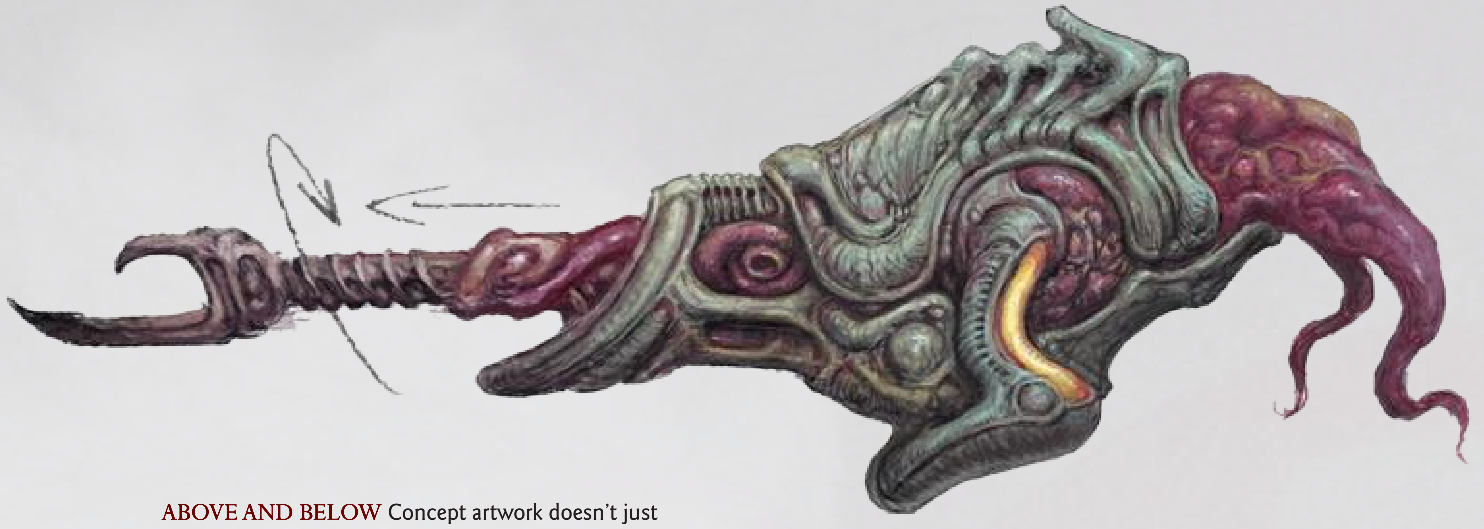
To understand *Scorn*'s arsenal, it's critical to first understand the organism wrapped around the main protagonist. This parasite is the key to accessing *Scorn*'s weapons. When it first latches onto the main character, it doesn't just dig its talons deep into the protagonist; it fuses with elements of the environment as well. Most importantly of all, its tail assimilates a tool gun handle.

Scorn's different weapons are, in fact, not entirely different after all. While they look distinct and function in unique ways, they're not standalone guns but attachments that connect to the same base, namely the handle protruding from the parasite's tail. This tail is effectively *Scorn*'s USB port. Without the parasite and its clip-on carnage powers, *Scorn*'s leading man would be rendered completely defenseless.

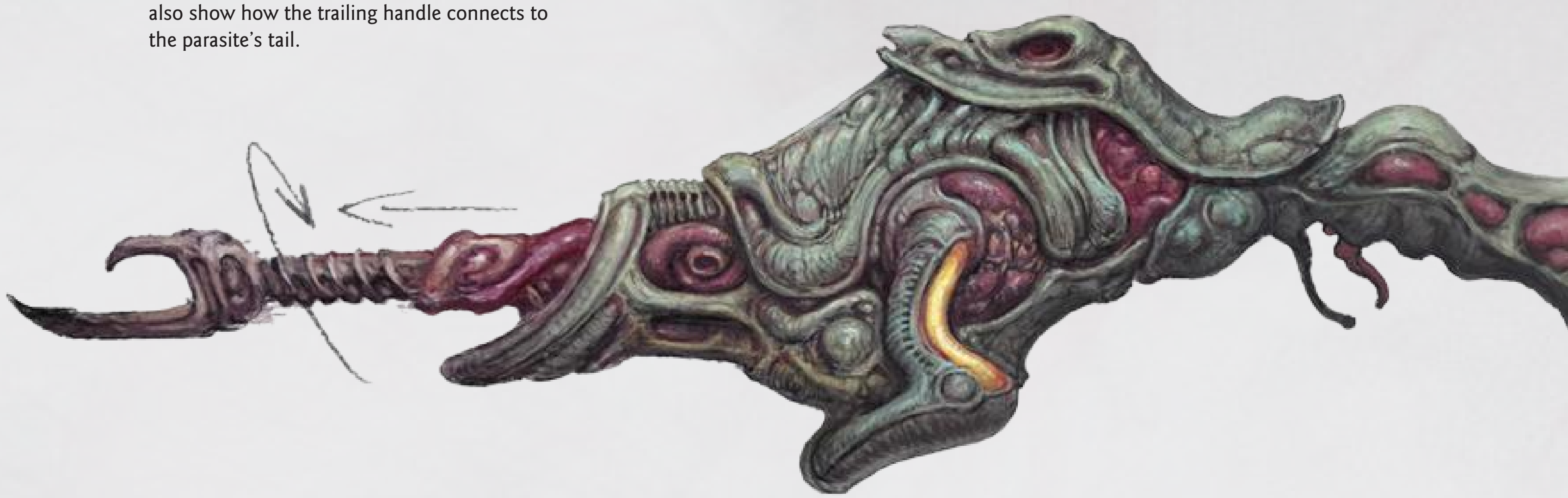
Like all aspects of *Scorn*, its weapons carry no official names. The simplest attachment of all is *Scorn*'s equivalent of a snub nose revolver. A small phallic design with both shaft and undercarriage encased in a bone shell, the reload mechanism is a bolt action handle operated in a semi-circular cranking motion.

Bigger, heftier, girthier attachments deliver more powerful kicks, with attachments resembling the effects of shotguns and grenade launchers primed to shred and obliterate enemies respectively. While this latter weapon fires pustule-covered spleens encased in a hardened shell, game designer Ljubomir Peklar is keen to underline the fact that most of *Scorn*'s weapons operate using typical munitions and gunpowder. "I wanted it that way to keep it grounded," he says. "If everything is out-of-the-ordinary the player could lose all connections to the world." This reasoning also nicely explains recognizable audio effects when shooting.

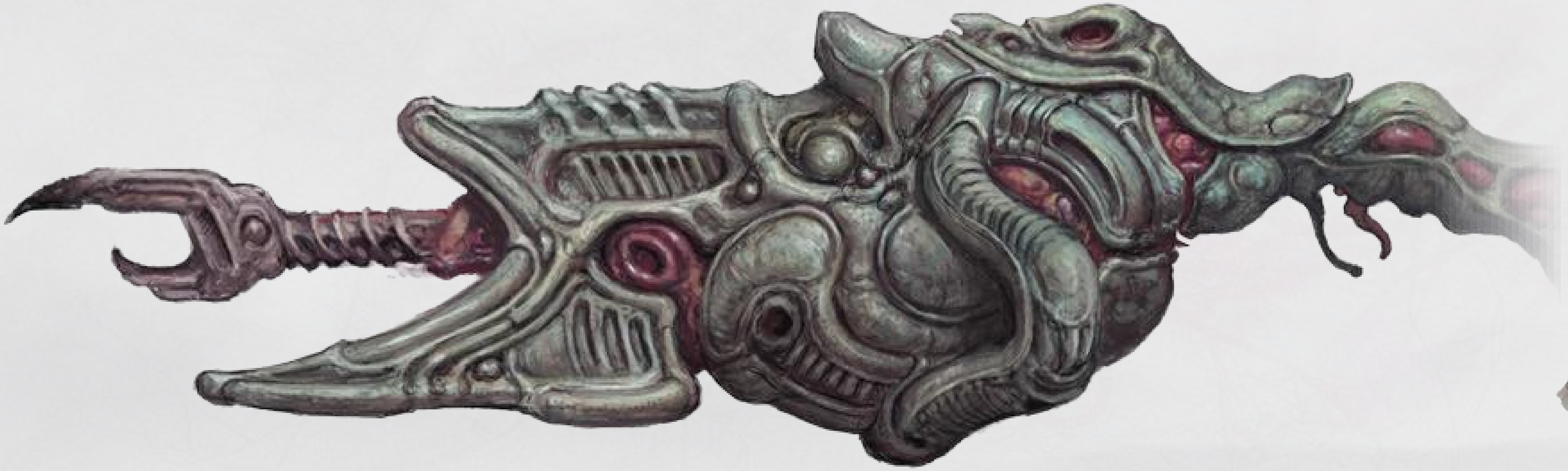
There is one exception to Peklar's gunpowder rule. An organic equivalent to an electric paint sprayer, this attachment comes in the form of an elasticated gland topped with a bony hood. It charges by pumping noxious fluid into the organ, which engorges until bursting point at which point a valve at the front opens to relieve the pressure, culminating in a deadly jet of bubbling, septic broth.

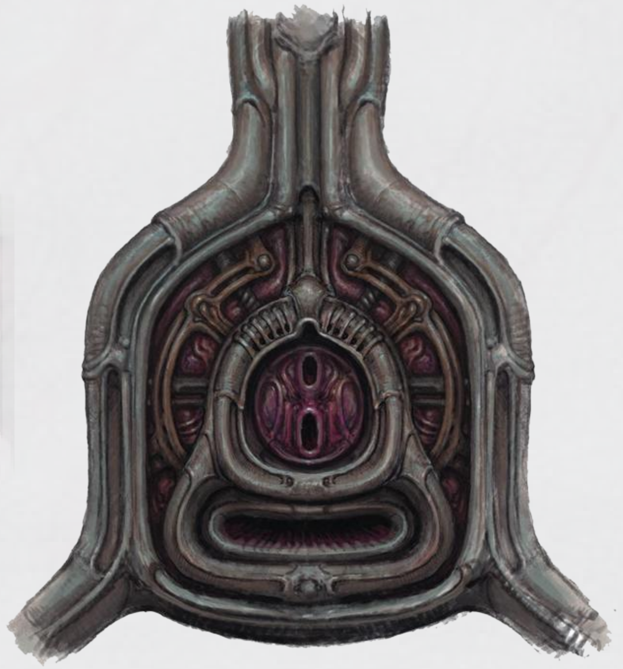


ABOVE AND BELOW Concept artwork doesn't just define how something looks, but also how it functions. These images establish both the central shaft's rotational spin and its pneumatic piston-like thrust. They also show how the trailing handle connects to the parasite's tail.

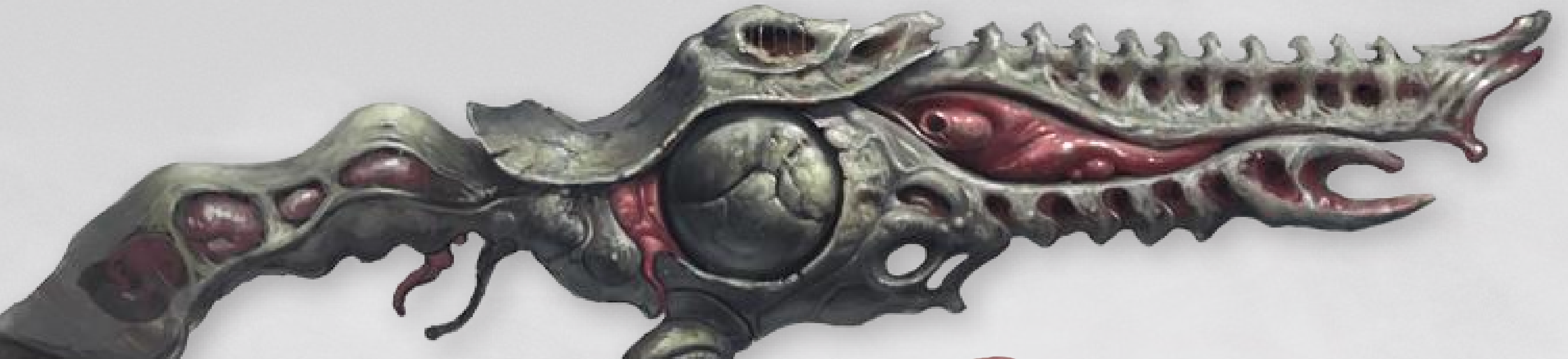


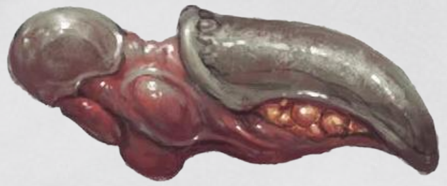
BELOW The tool gun is primarily used to interact with specific interfaces, but in a pinch, it can be deployed as a weapon to strike out at creatures if there's no alternative means of defense.

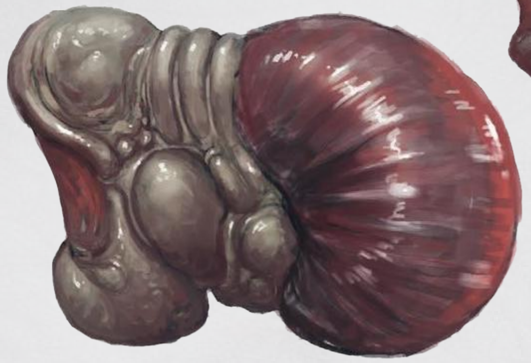


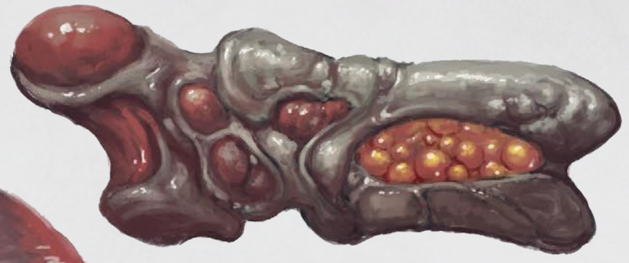


ABOVE The central chamber of the tool access console consists of a cylindrical organ with two small holes. Once the tip of the tool gun is inserted, it spins around to operate rotational mechanisms in the environment.

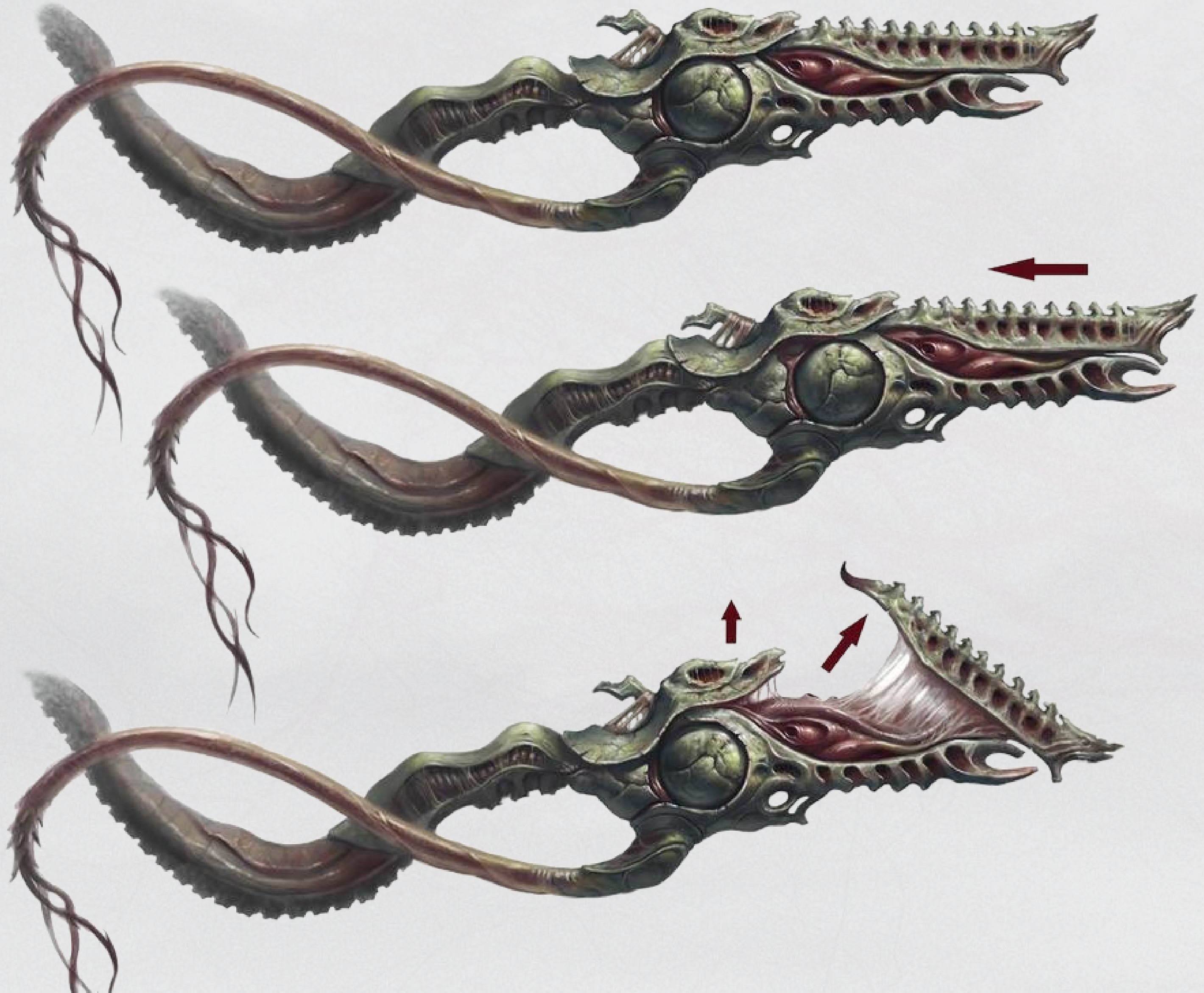


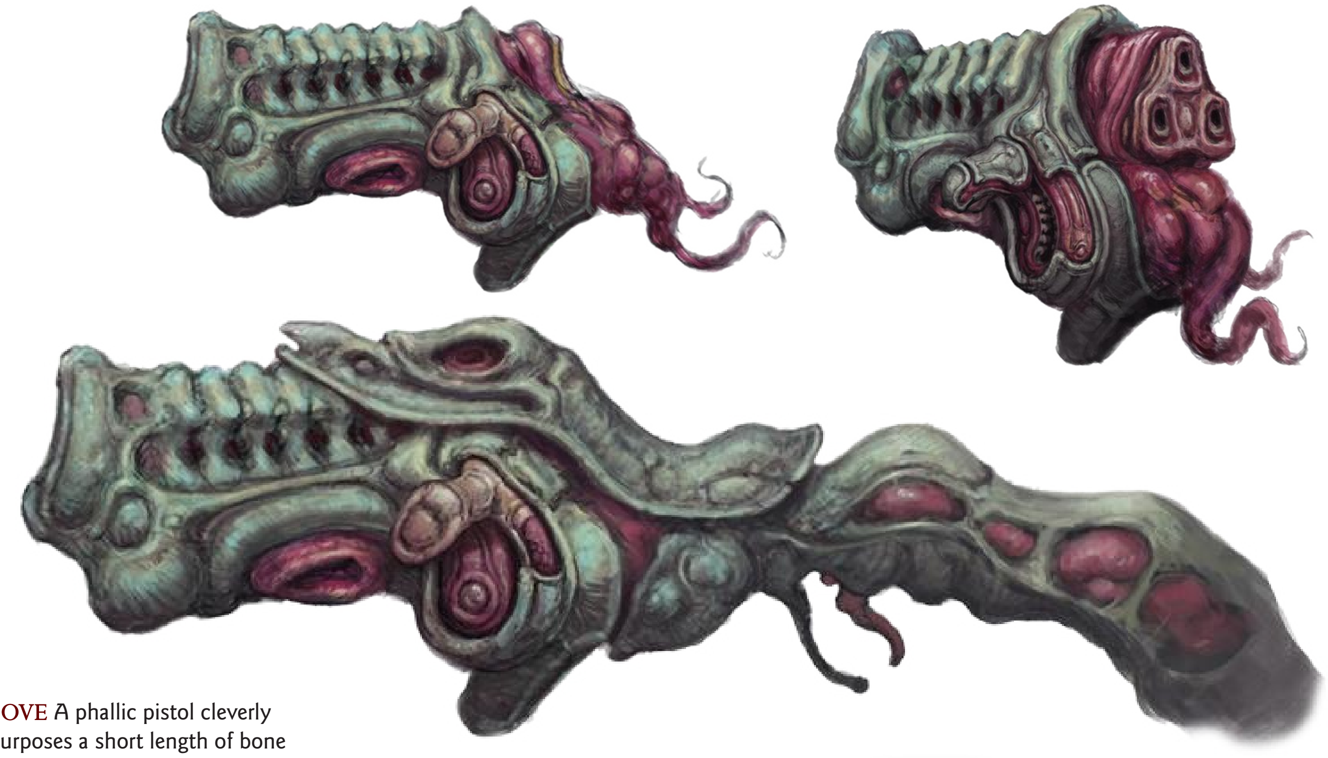




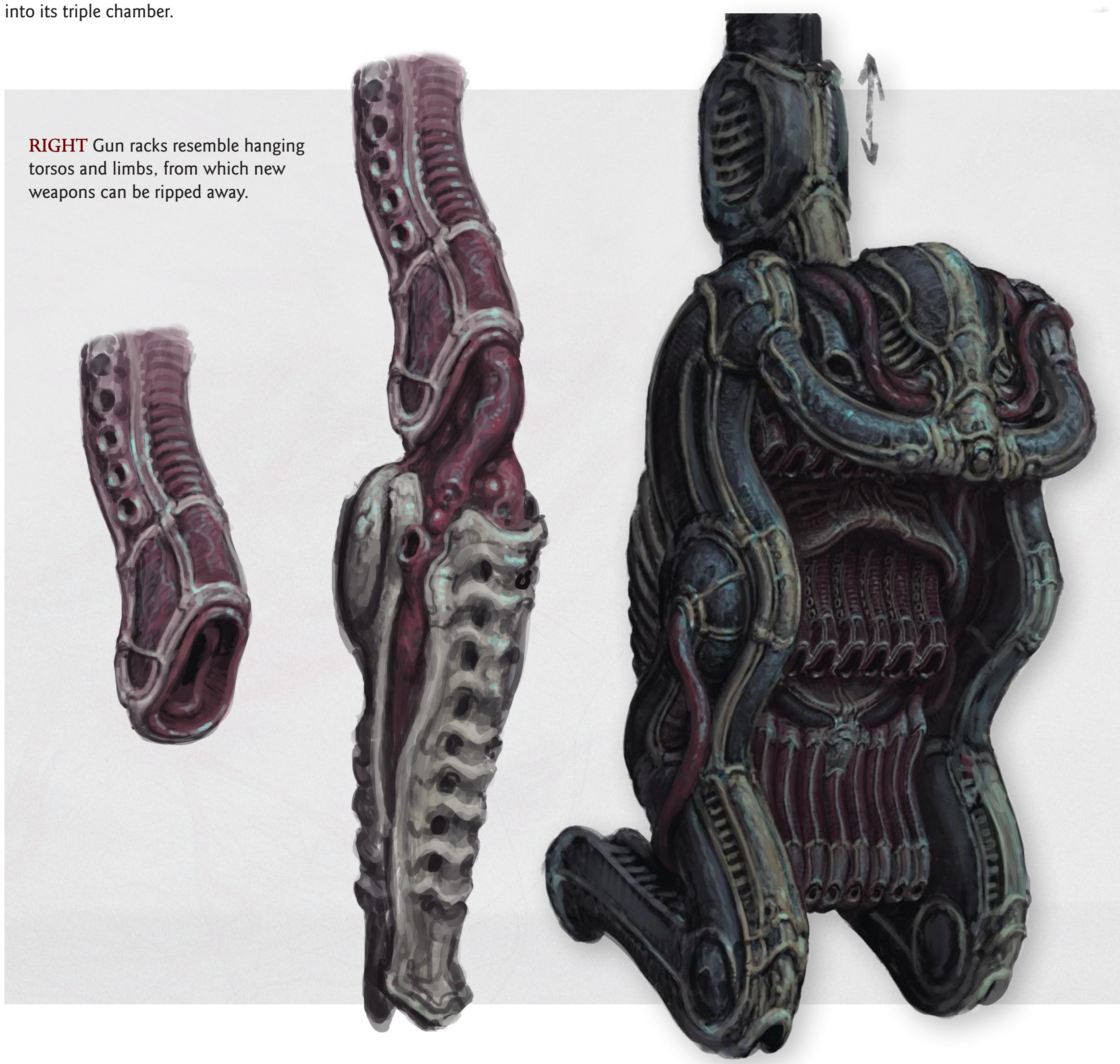


THIS PAGE Scorn's main gun shares loose similarities with the bony Glock 30 from David Cronenberg's sci-fi horror *eXistenZ* (1999). The forked tip beneath the muzzle keeps its design consistent with the tool gun.



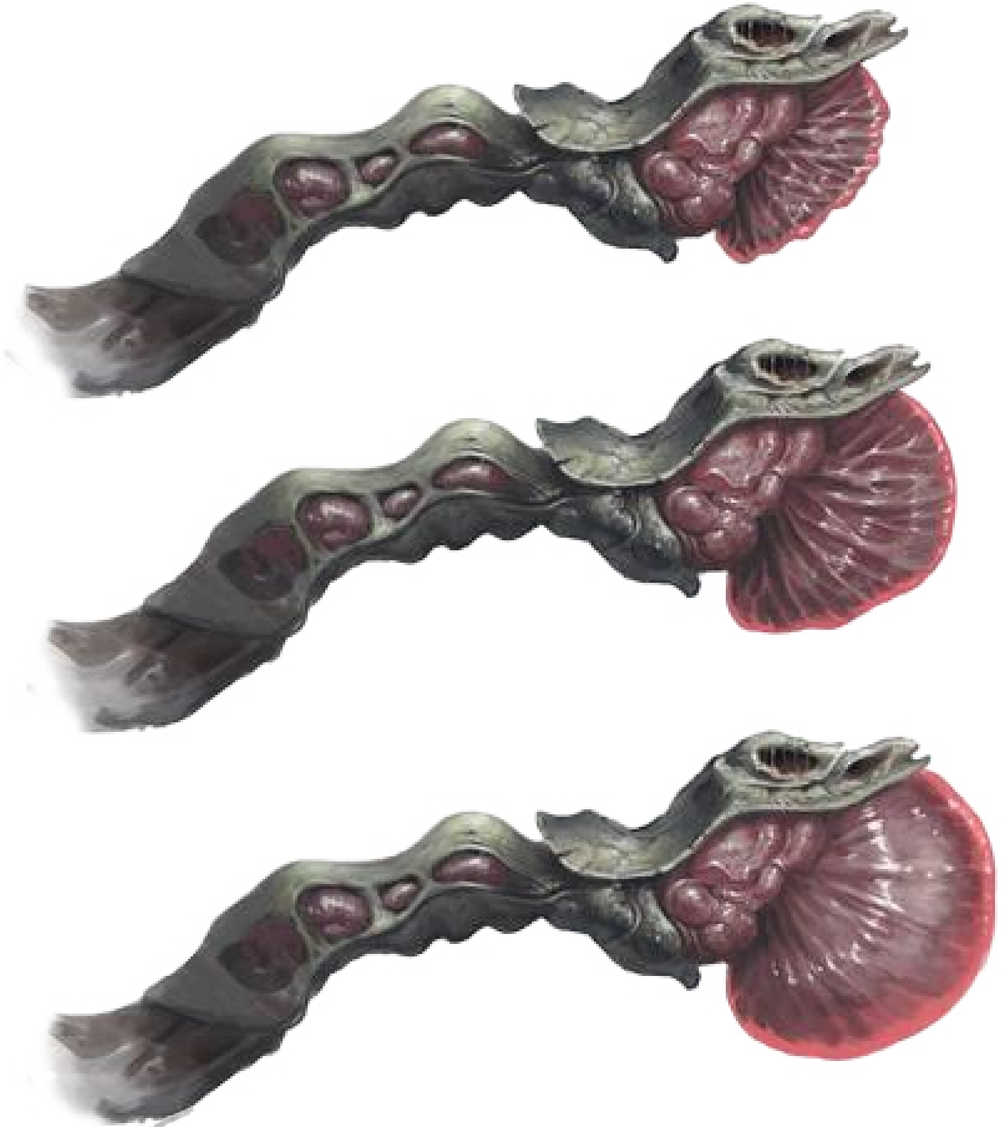


ABOVE A phallic pistol cleverly repurposes a short length of bone into its triple chamber.

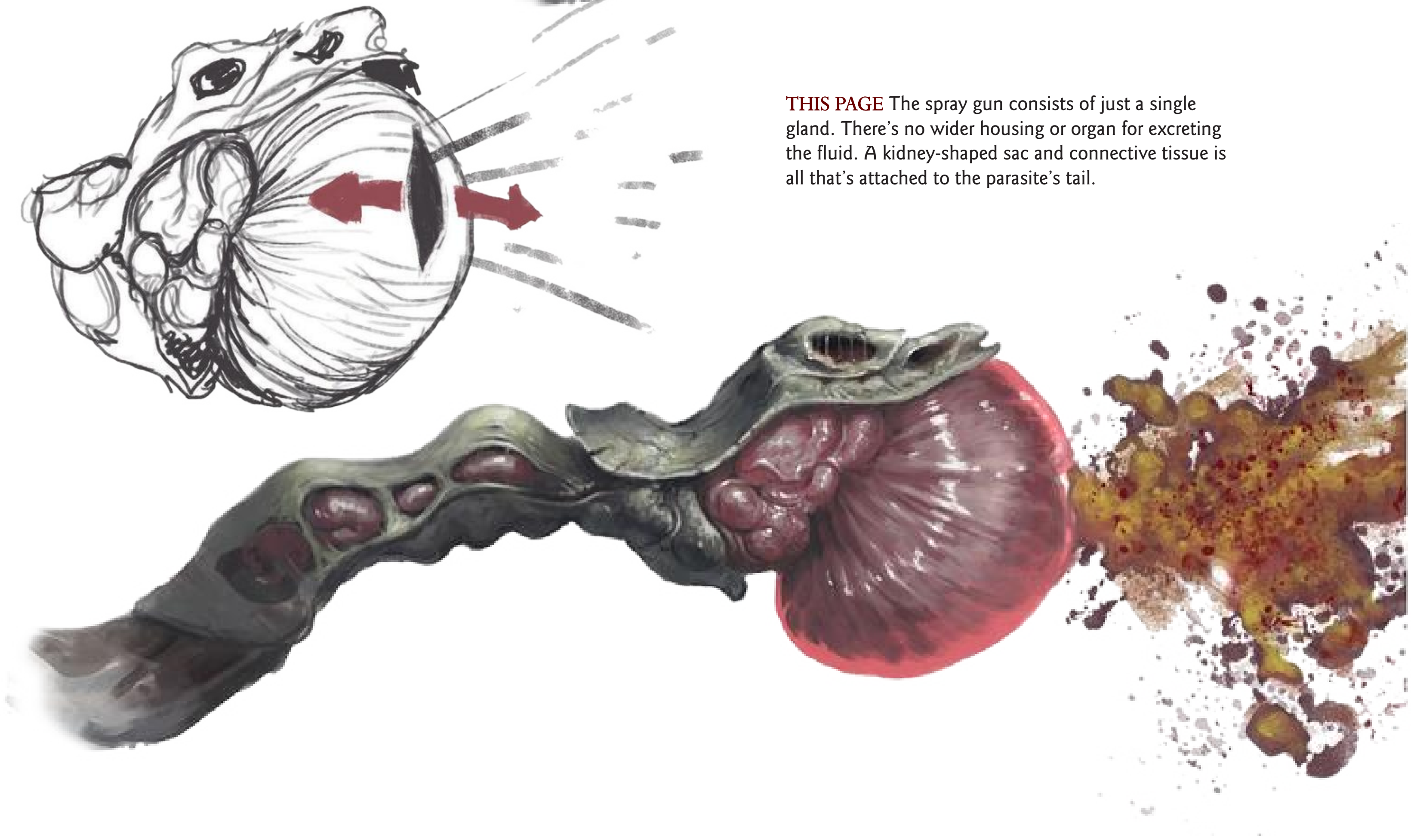


RIGHT Gun racks resemble hanging torsos and limbs, from which new weapons can be ripped away.

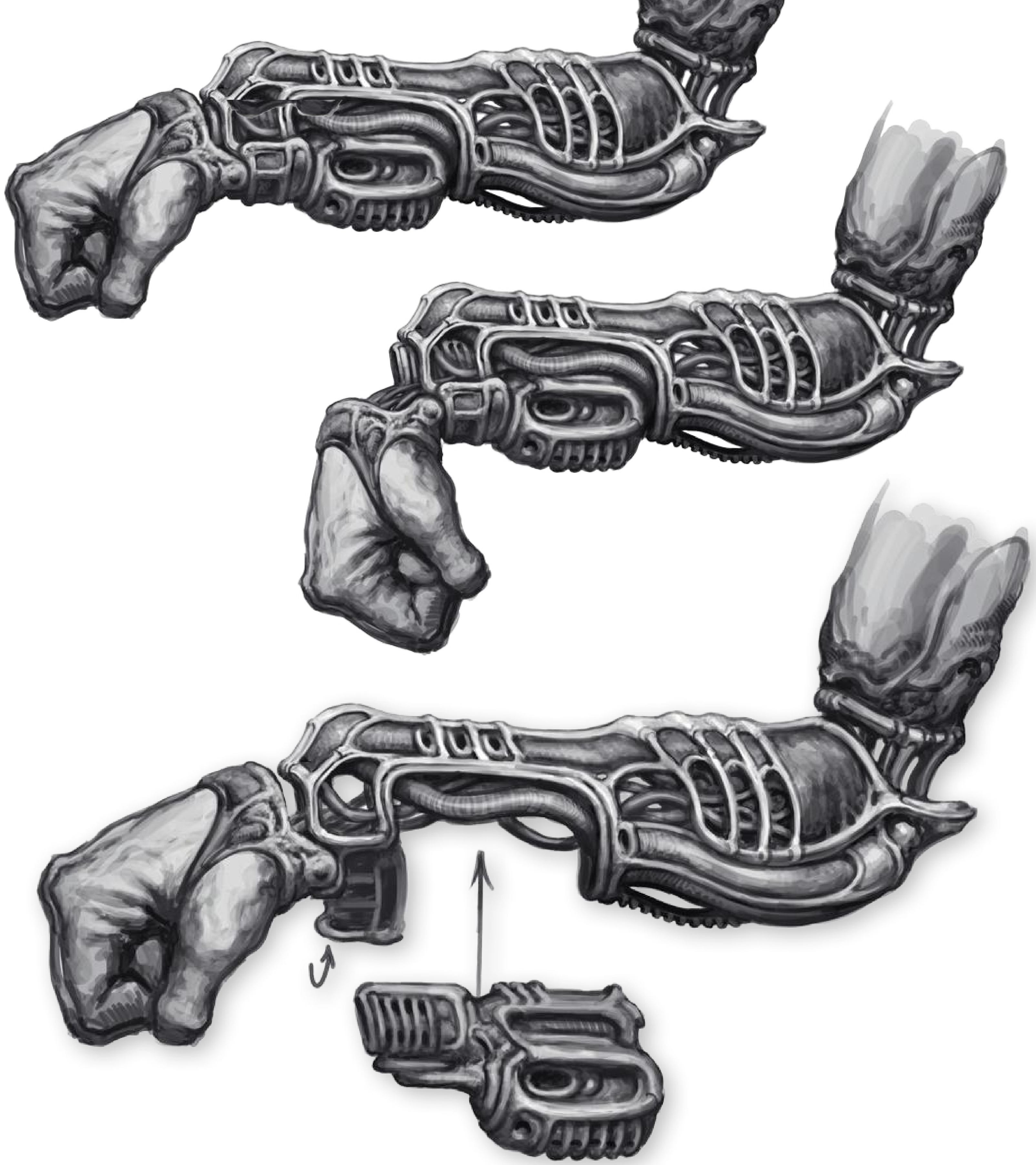
Of course, organic weapons aren't new concepts to gaming, with series such as *Half-Life* and *Prey* exploring them in years gone by. Concept artist Filip Acovic gave these interpretations of living guns a wide berth during *Scorn*'s conceptual stages, confirming that the only source of inspiration was drawn from David Cronenberg's 1999 sci-fi horror film *eXistenZ*. "Even then, I mainly designed from memory," Acovic points out. "I didn't want to watch the movie again because I would probably have drawn the same gun."

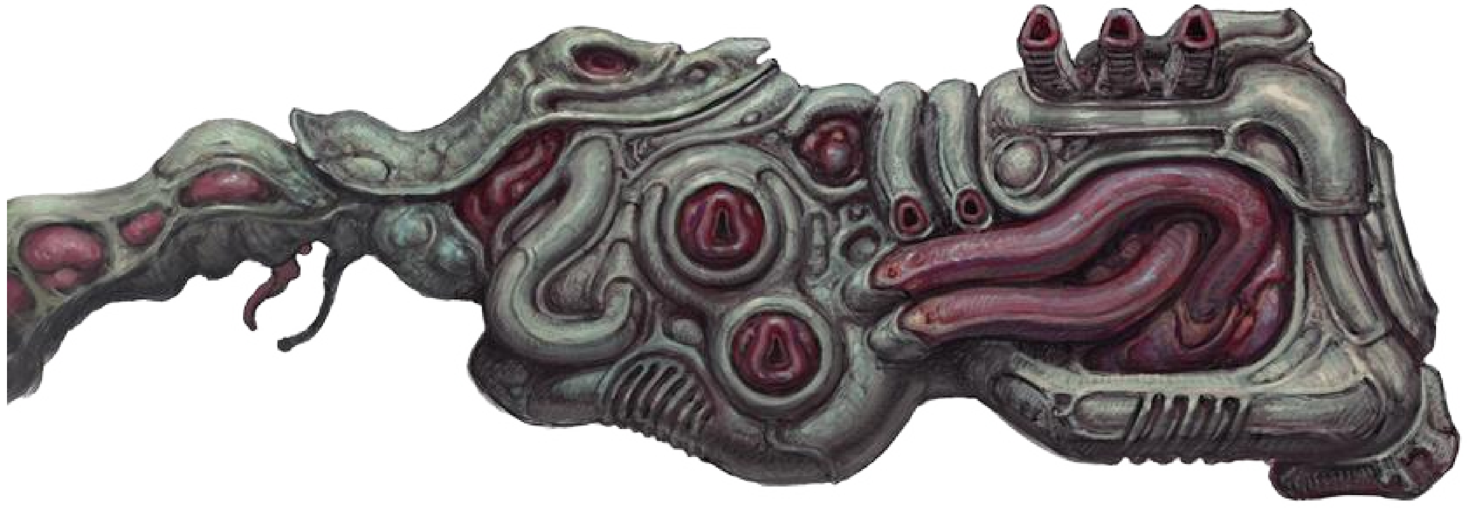


THIS PAGE The spray gun consists of just a single gland. There's no wider housing or organ for excreting the fluid. A kidney-shaped sac and connective tissue is all that's attached to the parasite's tail.

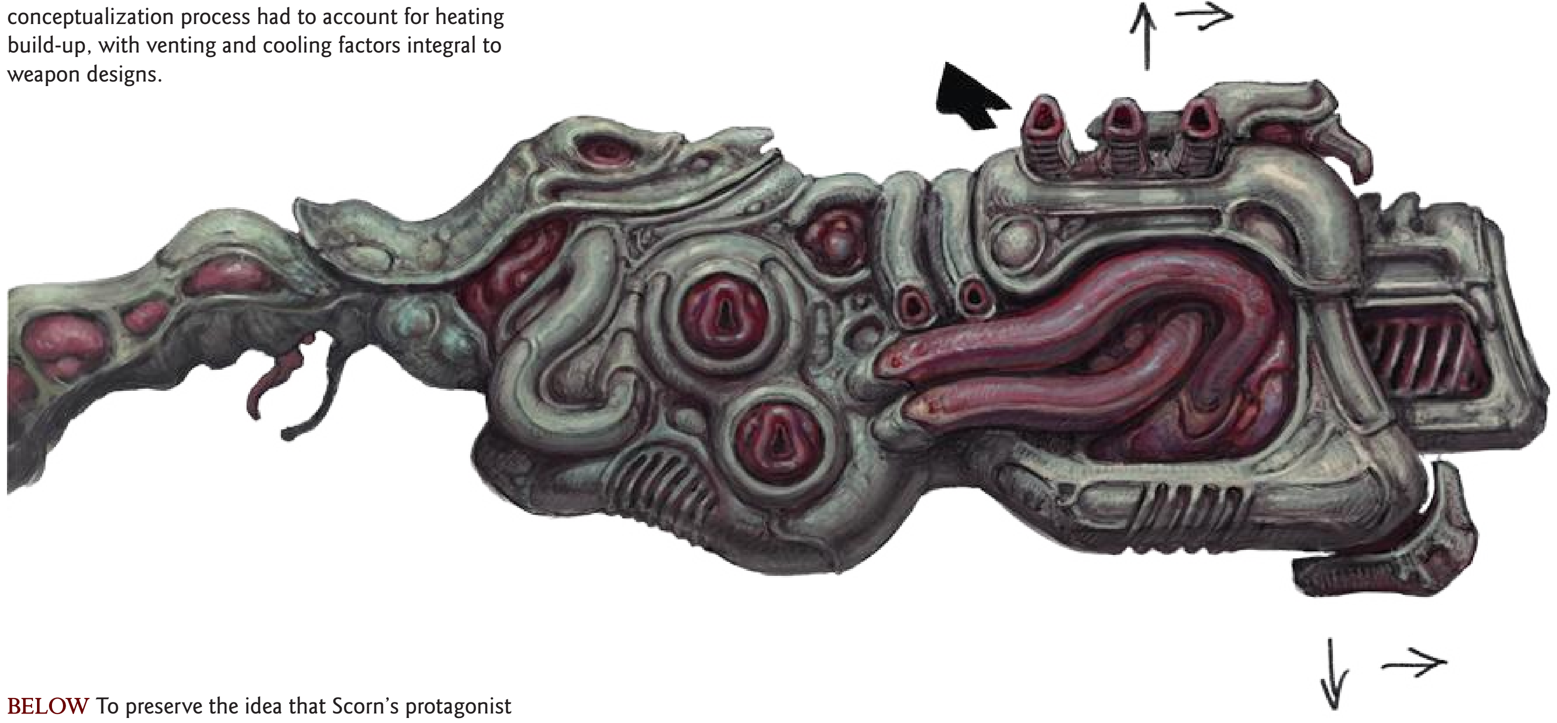


BELOW One concept, depicting a mechanical gun-arm with an ammunition cartridge slotting into the underside of the forearm, and a fist flipping down on a hinge to reveal a hidden barrel embedded in the wrist joint, is a hangover from an unpursued plot point. In one pass of Scorn's story, the protagonist could remove the parasite as if cutting away cancerous cells, and with that operation came the inevitable loss of all weapons. "The idea was that you would use technology to maim and upgrade yourself," explains Filip Acovic. "To modify yourself and turn yourself into some sort of cyborg."

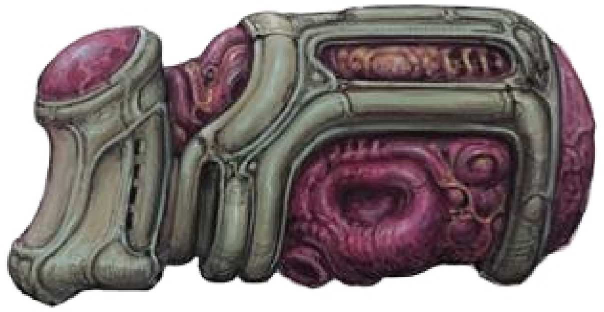


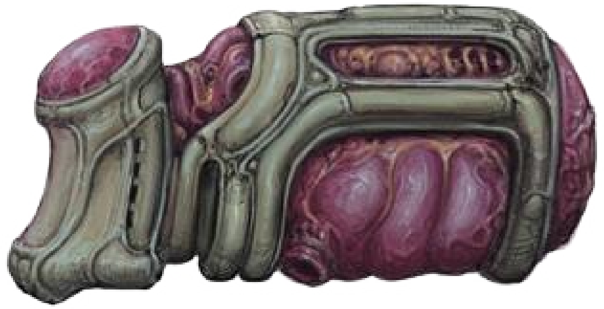


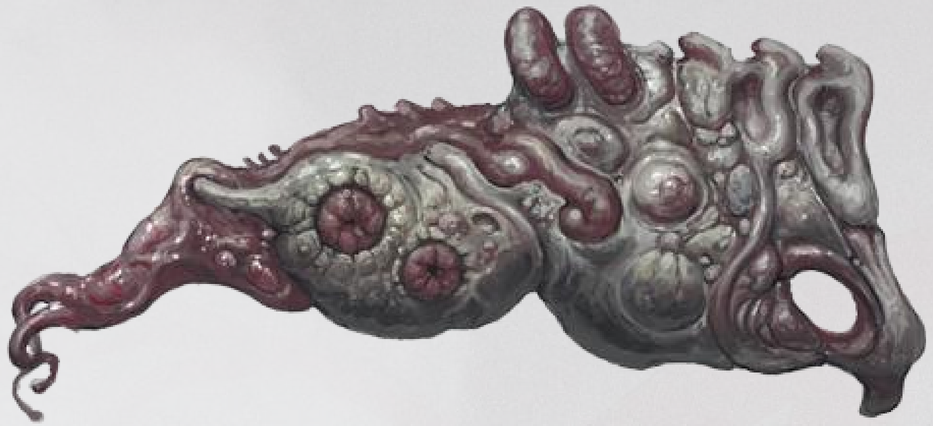
ABOVE AND BELOW Scorn's weaponry relies on gunpowder to fire bullets and shells. The gun conceptualization process had to account for heating build-up, with venting and cooling factors integral to weapon designs.



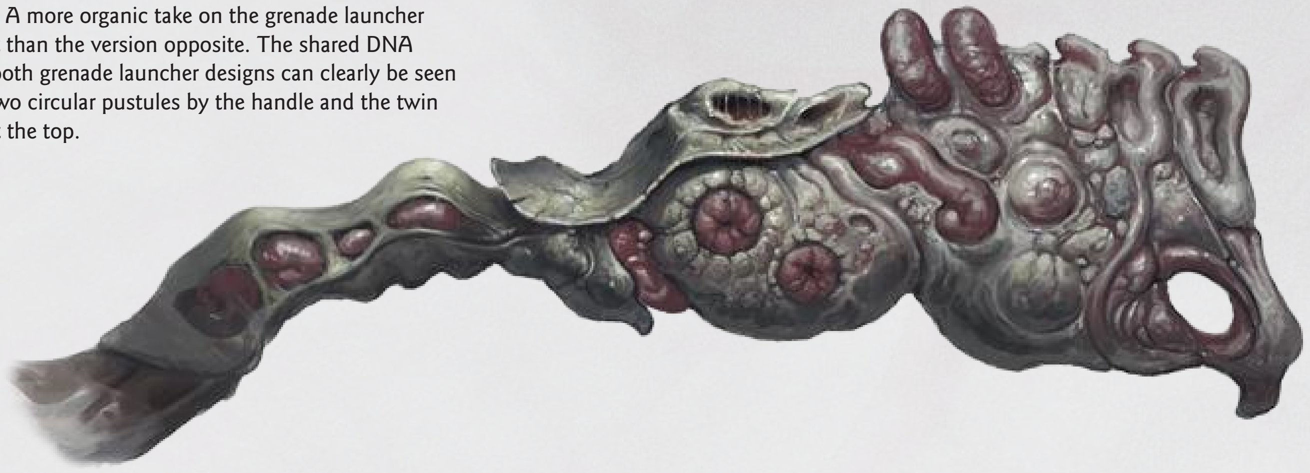
BELOW To preserve the idea that Scorn's protagonist is incapable of fighting without the parasite's help, grenades can only be fired from the launcher. They aren't munitions to be primed and thrown at enemies.

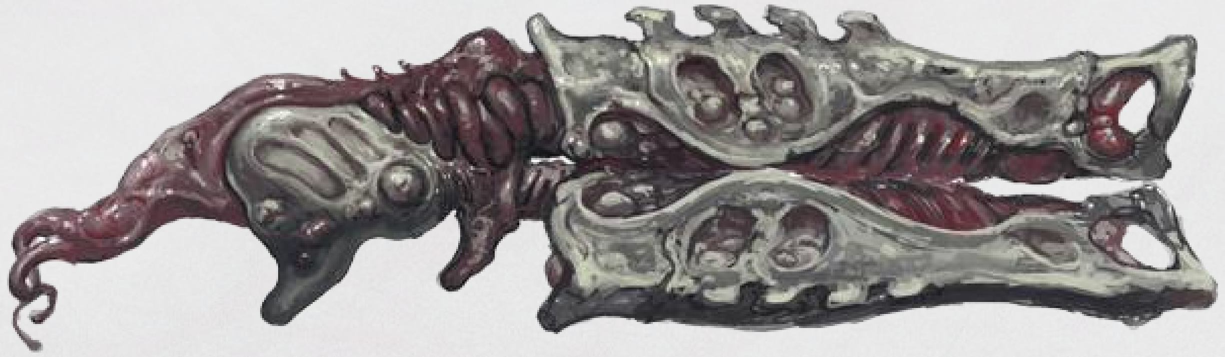




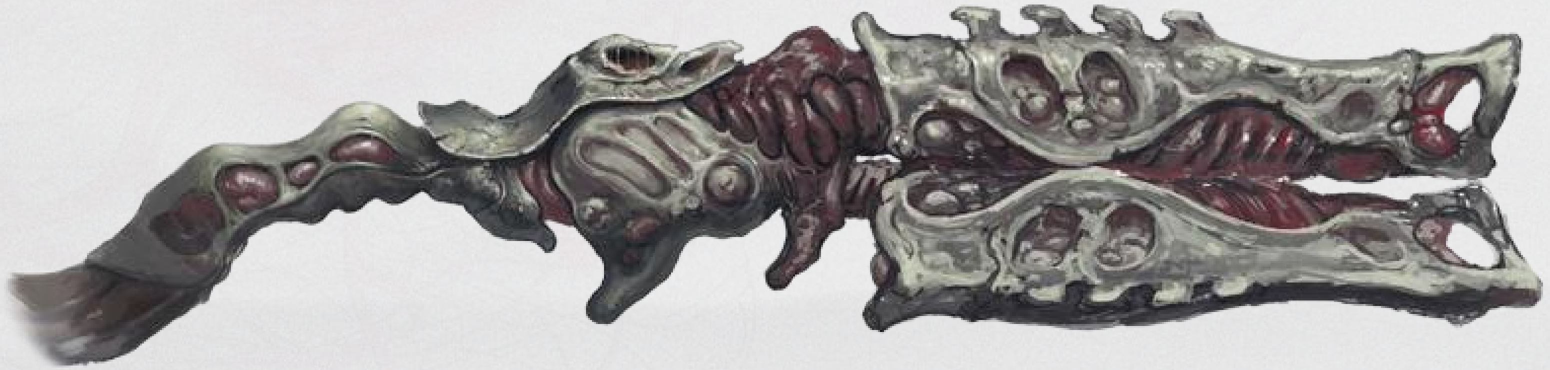


RIGHT A more organic take on the grenade launcher concept than the version opposite. The shared DNA across both grenade launcher designs can clearly be seen in the two circular pustules by the handle and the twin tubes at the top.





BELOW A concave muzzle instinctively lets players understand this gun has a shotgun-like purpose, firing a wide spread of shrapnel for short-range devastation.



INTERFACES

As the primary points of interaction throughout the game, few features are scrutinized by players as heavily as *Scorn*'s main interfaces. Encompassing switches, buttons, controllers, door locking mechanisms, and the all-important health and ammunition replenishment systems, these objects are the gateways to unlocking pathways deeper into the world... or to surviving long enough to witness them.

Not only do these interfaces need to fit the world's aesthetics, which is to say they must look unlike anything players have seen before either in the real world or in other games, they also need to simultaneously communicate their functions through clear visual design and animations alone. These dissonant criteria aren't easily satisfied. In many cases, multiple conceptual iterations were required.

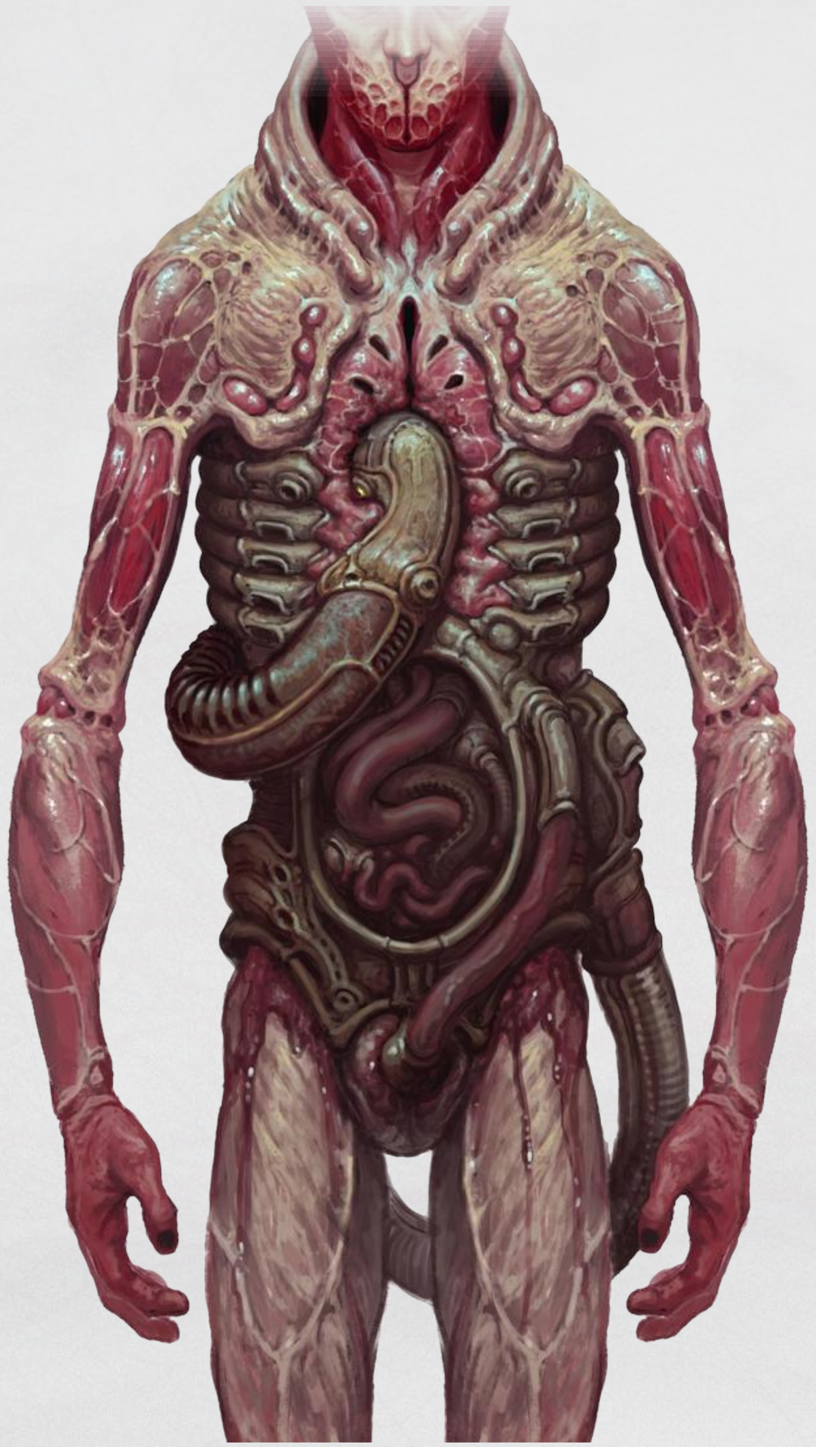
"I had to design a bunch of really, really strange controls, and some of them were just too weird," concedes concept artist Filip Acovic as he surveys the images across these pages, some of which didn't make the final game. "Some of these are experiments. They just can't work in a game; sometimes it seemed like a cool idea but it simply wasn't practical."

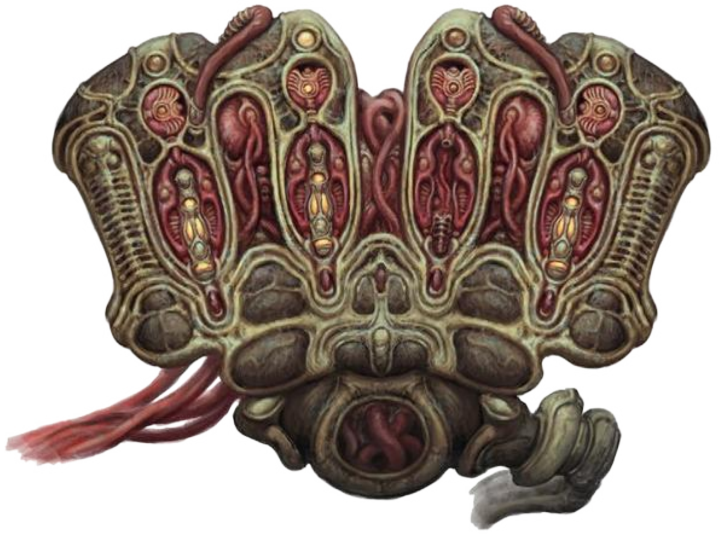
Whether discarded abstractions or the final designs, biomechanisms underpin every single concept. Acovic's artwork reimagines fuse boxes as pulmonary systems, recasts sphincters as power buttons, and conceives of door locks governed by functioning hearts. Belts aren't items to be worn but piping that's plugged into the torso, feeding off the body and nourishing it at the same time. Switches aren't simply levers flicked so much as protrusions to be wrenched into place, like cracking a stubborn bone from a cadaver.

An idea that permeates multiple interface mechanisms is one of penetration. From *Scorn*'s very first concept pieces the protagonist was always envisioned as a tool rather than just a vessel, his limbs and digits doubling as keys for interactive features. Players are frequently expected to thrust arms deep within the housing of console units to open doors and activate organic jet bridges, or to slide their fingers into fibrous tubing to tug on slide levers to raise and lower lift platforms. They're motions intended to leave players vulnerable.

"There is a feeling of uncertainty," says Filip Acovic of players having to insert their extremities into *Scorn*'s many mechanisms, or of needing to plunge external items into their own bodies. "Interfacing with a living machine has to have this element of unpredictability; not only is it mechanical, it's also alive. Something could happen. *You* could get trapped, or infected."

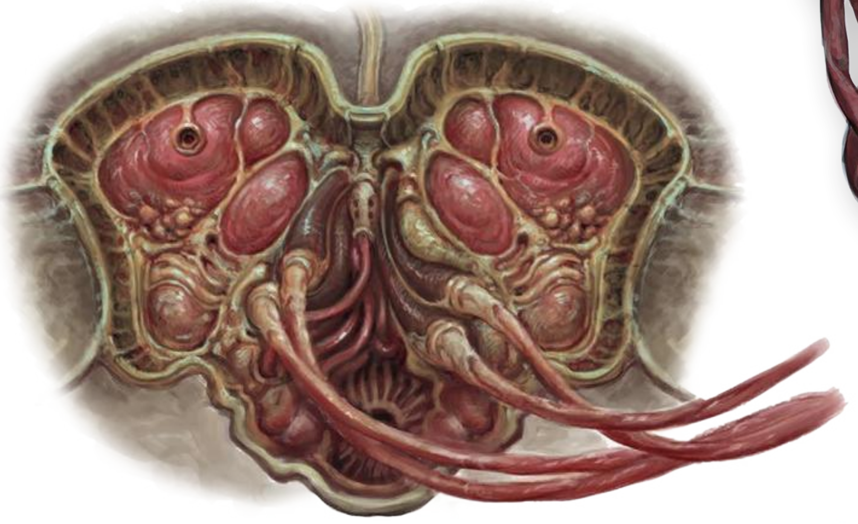
That fear of reaching into the unknown goes hand in hand with the anticipation of sustaining horrific injuries. Towards *Scorn*'s denouement it becomes apparent that the entire civilization is built upon pain and experimentation into its effects on the human mind. More than just tools of player agency and a means of unlocking progression, *Scorn*'s different interfaces and their allusions to pain ultimately serve to reinforce one of the world's core themes through every single action the player takes.

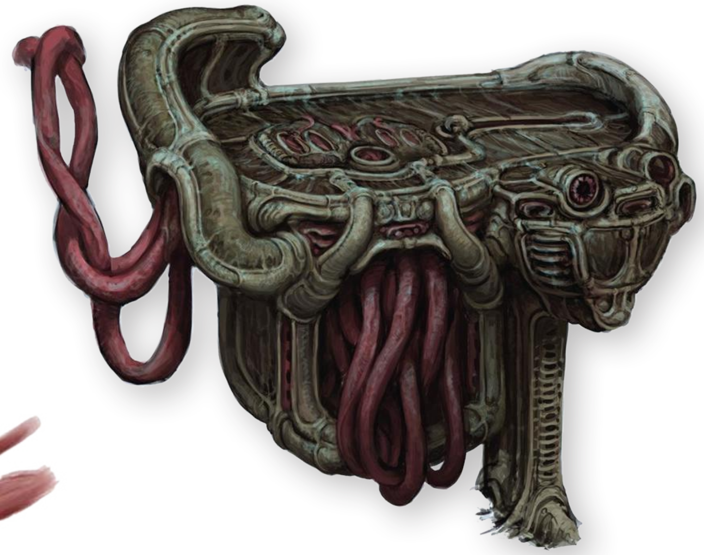




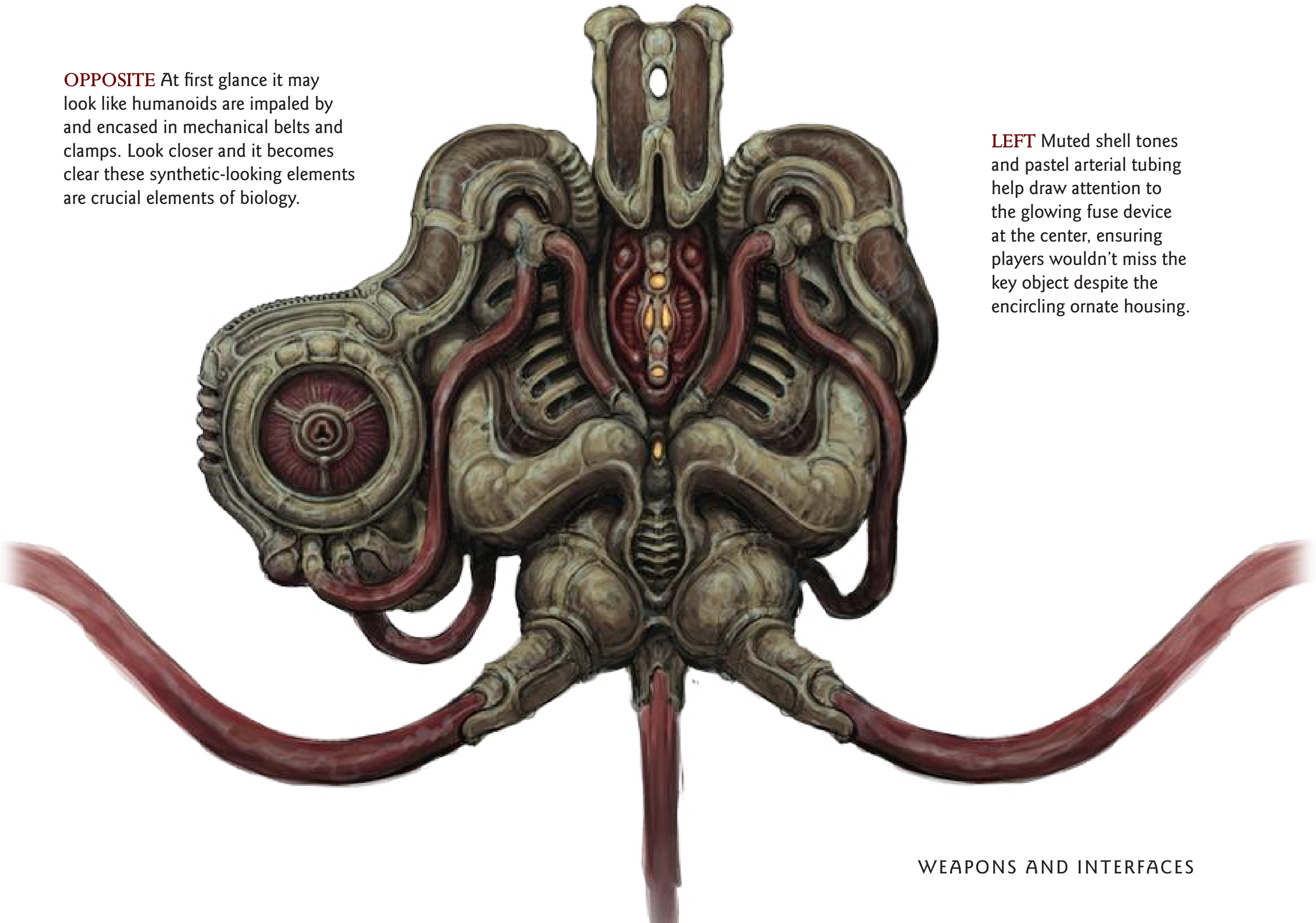
LEFT What would a fuse box look like, and how would it function, in a biomechanical world? Artwork such as this explores these ideas as the team defined the objects powering and regulating Scorn's structures and machinery.

BELOW Different console systems were designed to operate a wide range of machinery. This one houses the fuse box-like machine (left), and like most consoles within Scorn it's operated when players insert hands and arms into its orifices.

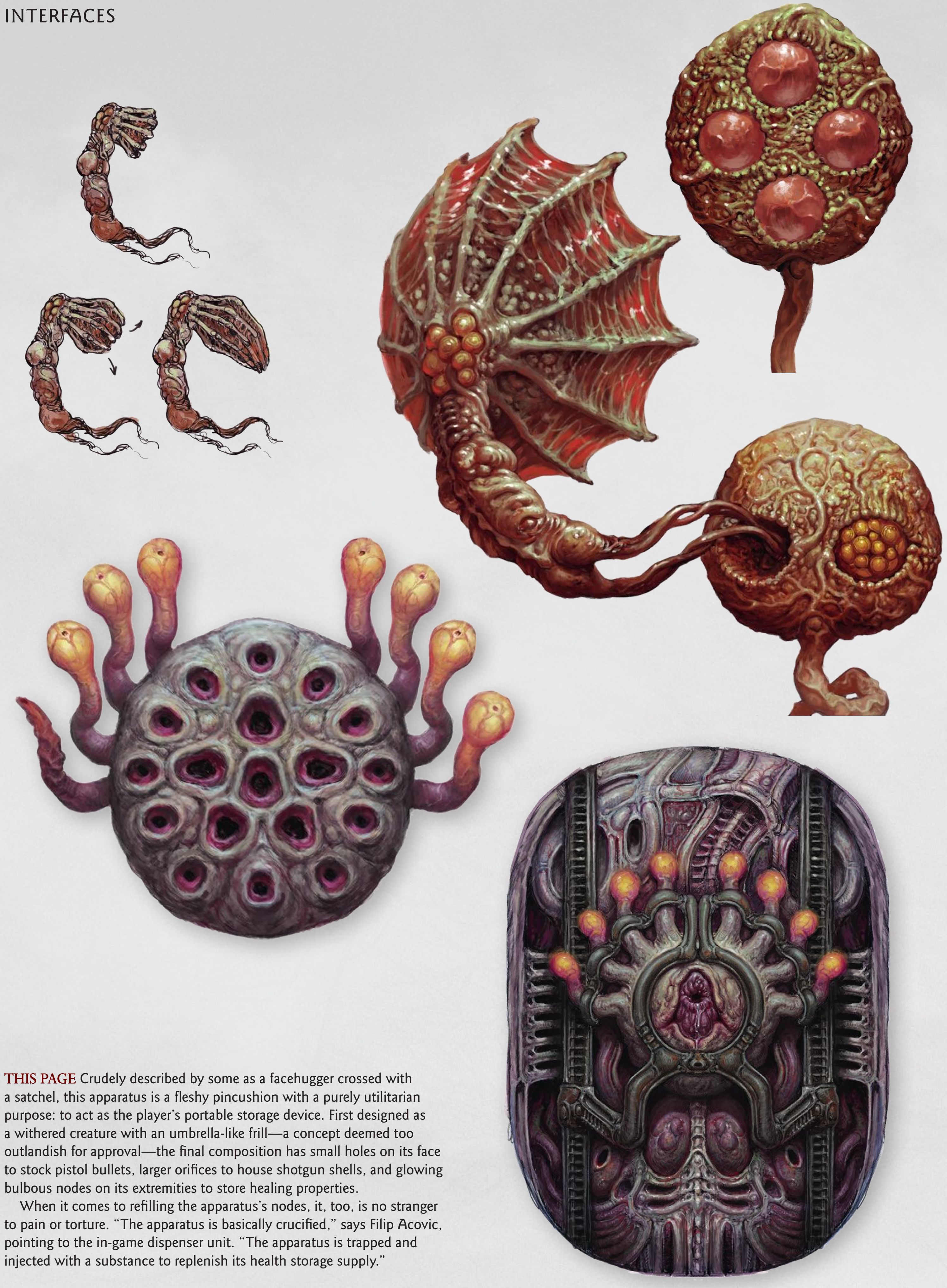




OPPOSITE At first glance it may look like humanoids are impaled by and encased in mechanical belts and clamps. Look closer and it becomes clear these synthetic-looking elements are crucial elements of biology.

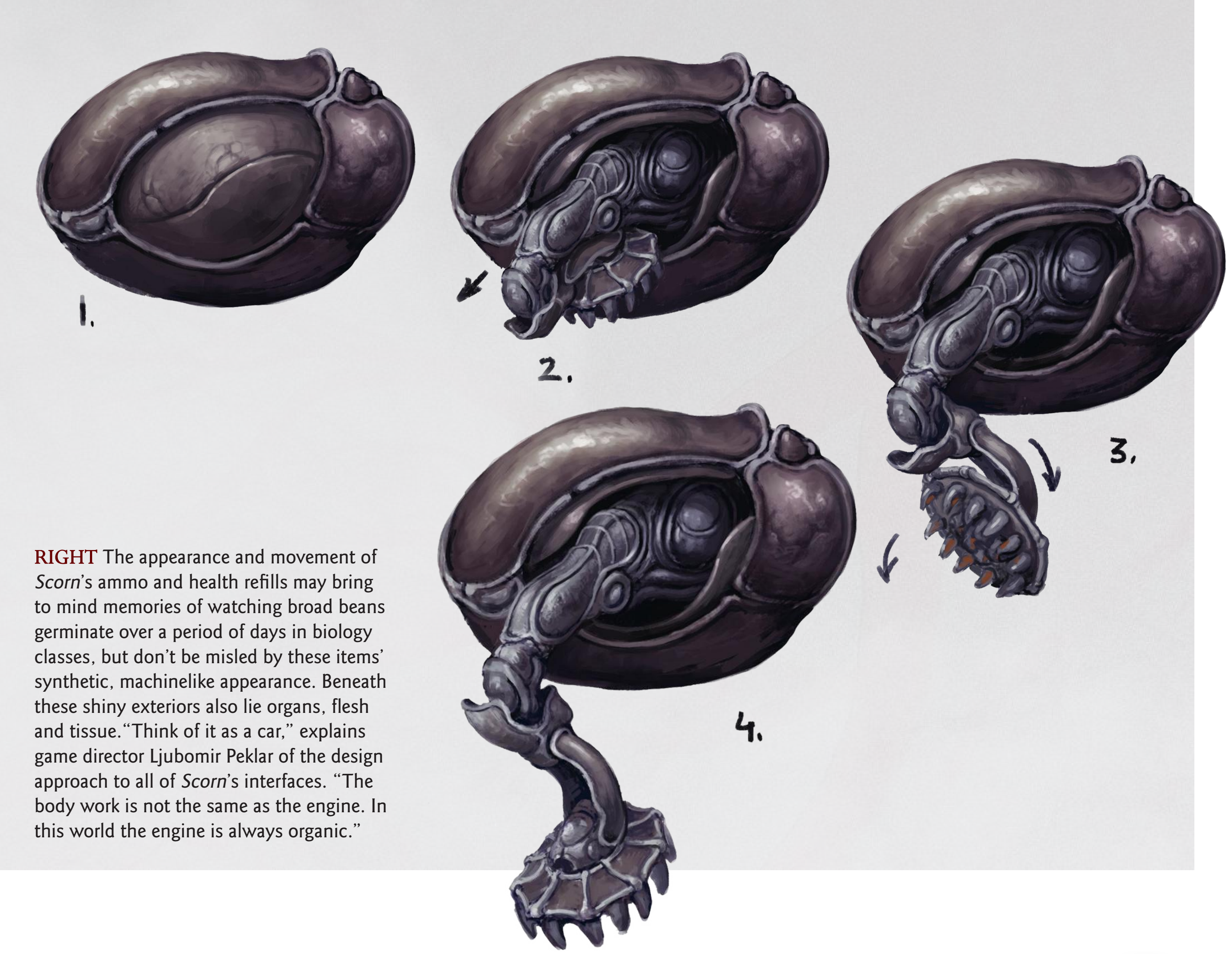


LEFT Muted shell tones and pastel arterial tubing help draw attention to the glowing fuse device at the center, ensuring players wouldn't miss the key object despite the encircling ornate housing.

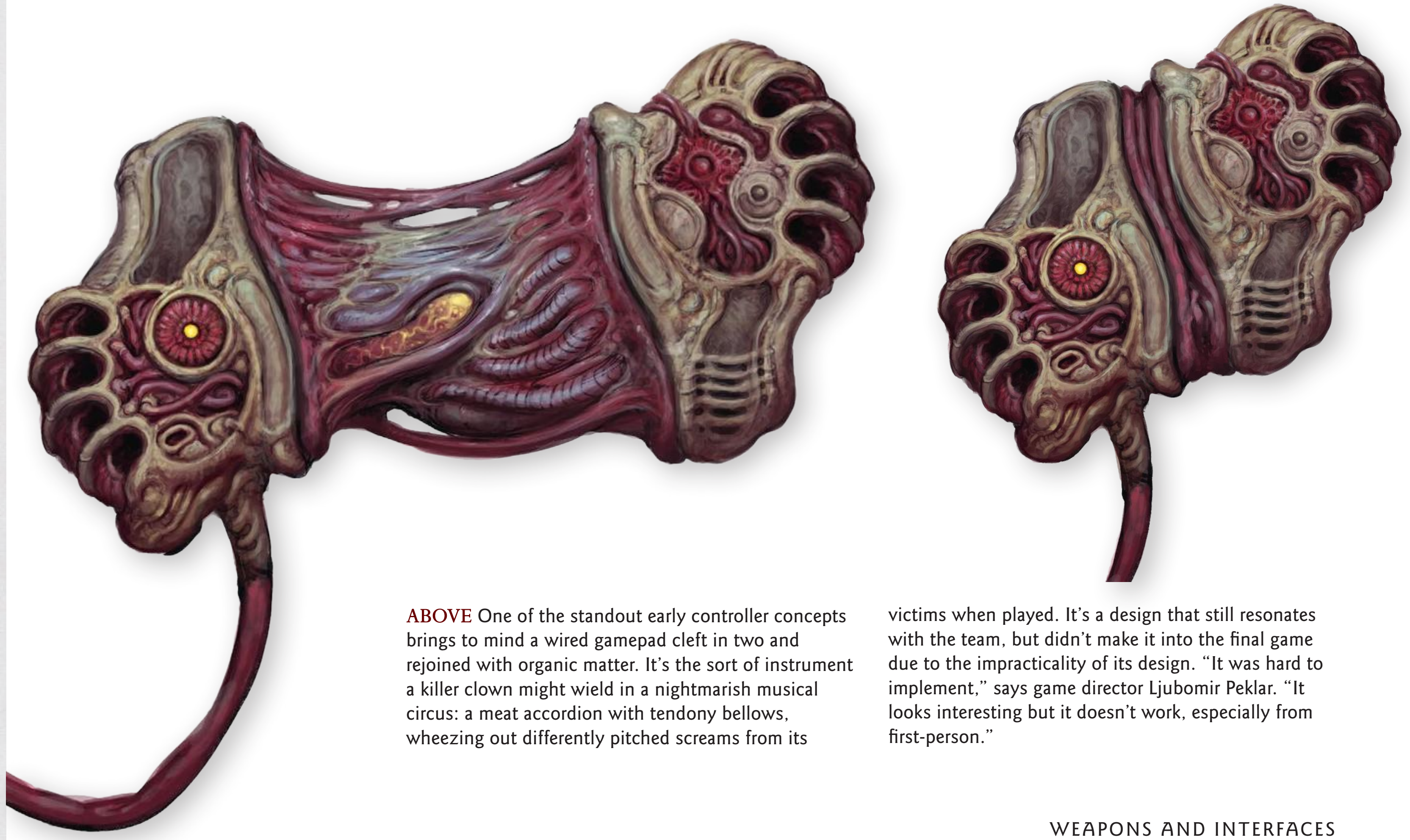


THIS PAGE Crudely described by some as a facehugger crossed with a satchel, this apparatus is a fleshy pincushion with a purely utilitarian purpose: to act as the player's portable storage device. First designed as a withered creature with an umbrella-like frill—a concept deemed too outlandish for approval—the final composition has small holes on its face to stock pistol bullets, larger orifices to house shotgun shells, and glowing bulbous nodes on its extremities to store healing properties.

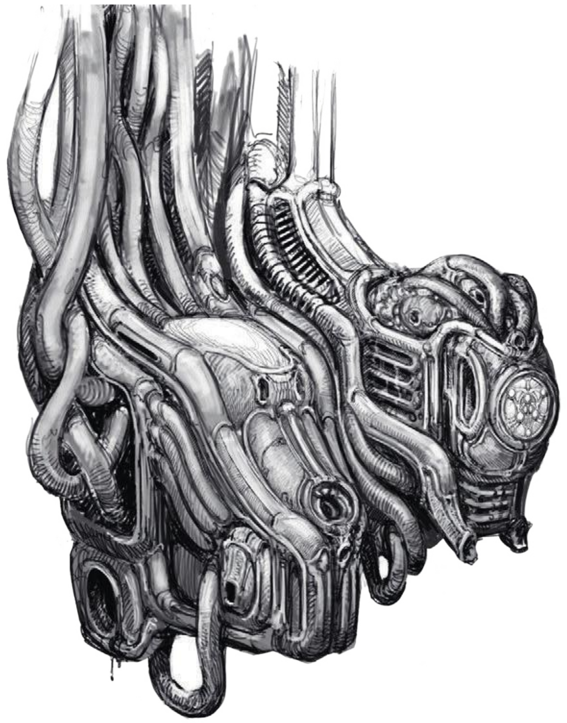
When it comes to refilling the apparatus's nodes, it, too, is no stranger to pain or torture. "The apparatus is basically crucified," says Filip Acovic, pointing to the in-game dispenser unit. "The apparatus is trapped and injected with a substance to replenish its health storage supply."

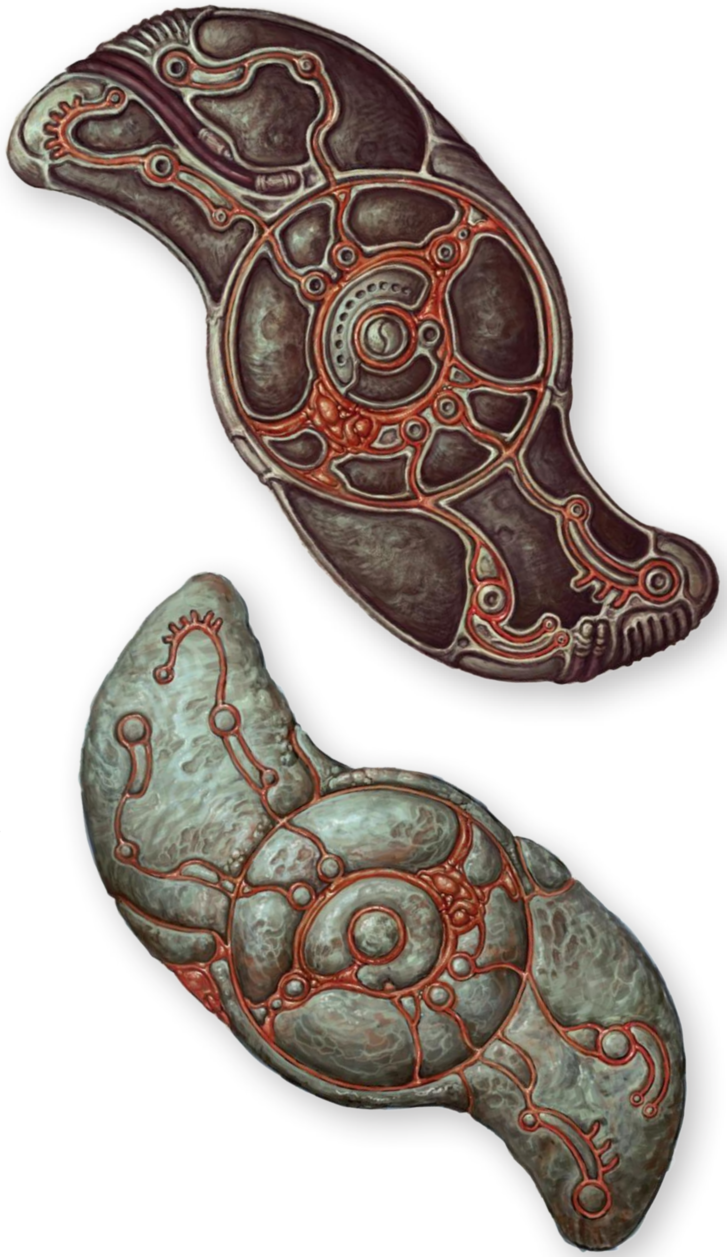


RIGHT The appearance and movement of *Scorn*'s ammo and health refills may bring to mind memories of watching broad beans germinate over a period of days in biology classes, but don't be misled by these items' synthetic, machinelike appearance. Beneath these shiny exteriors also lie organs, flesh and tissue. "Think of it as a car," explains game director Ljubomir Peklar of the design approach to all of *Scorn*'s interfaces. "The body work is not the same as the engine. In this world the engine is always organic."



ABOVE One of the standout early controller concepts brings to mind a wired gamepad cleft in two and rejoined with organic matter. It's the sort of instrument a killer clown might wield in a nightmarish musical circus: a meat accordion with tendony bellows, wheezing out differently pitched screams from its victims when played. It's a design that still resonates with the team, but didn't make it into the final game due to the impracticality of its design. "It was hard to implement," says game director Ljubomir Peklar. "It looks interesting but it doesn't work, especially from first-person."





An adventure experience at heart, *Scorn* doesn't shy away from decades' worth of tried and trusted game mechanics by halting player progress with locked doors. Unlike most other games, however, seeking brass keys or plastic rectangles was never up for consideration.

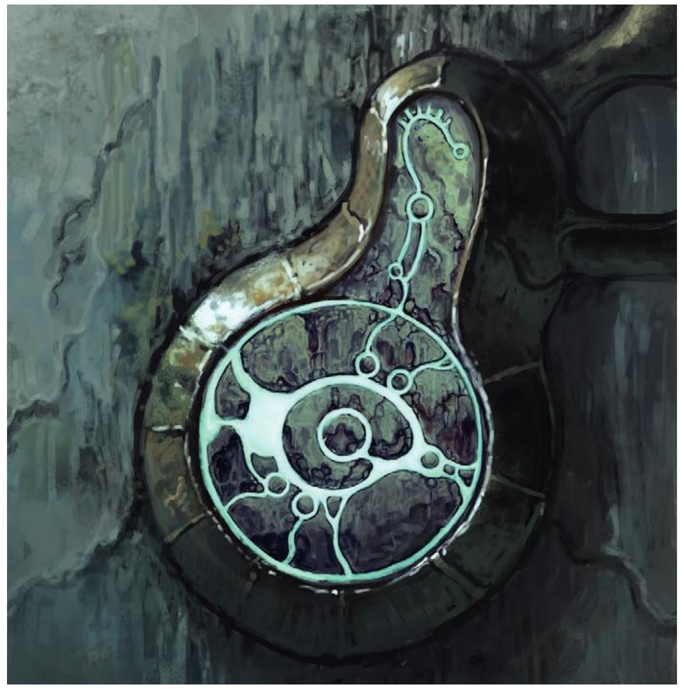
"We can't really use keycards in *Scorn*," says concept artist Filip Acovic. "We had to think of something much more elaborate, strange and unwieldy."

The original concept for *Scorn*'s keys involved gray lumps forged by primitive key presses, with capillary circuity on its surface. Acovic laughs at how it looks like a "stone or a potato", admitting it was quickly thrown together through necessity for a spot of very early in-game testing.

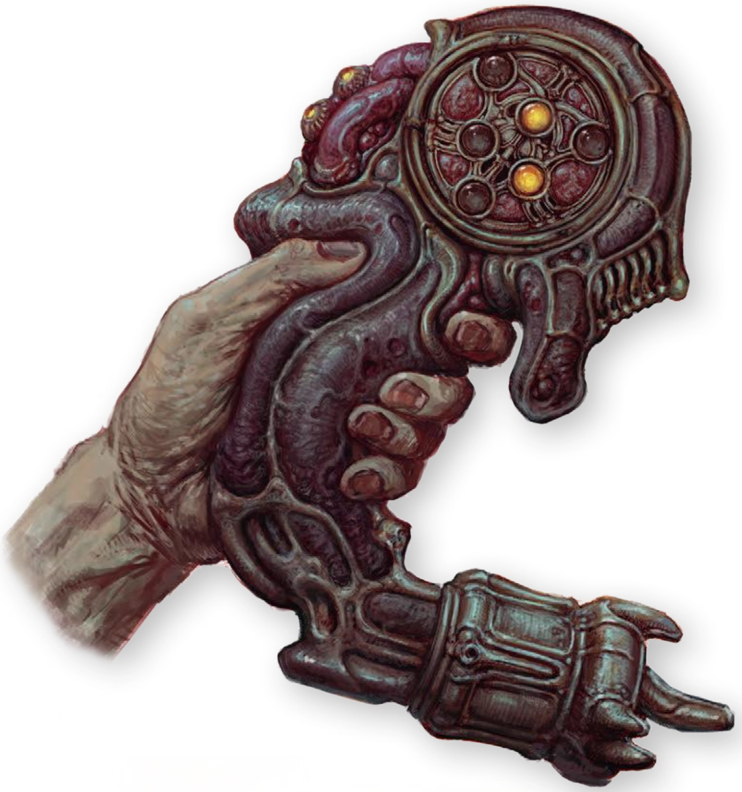
"There were different symbols for different doors, but the first symbol ideas were too complicated and ornate," says Acovic. "They weren't really recognizable and you didn't really know what you were looking at." A color-changing lock interface only exacerbated the confusion, something Acovic considered "garish".

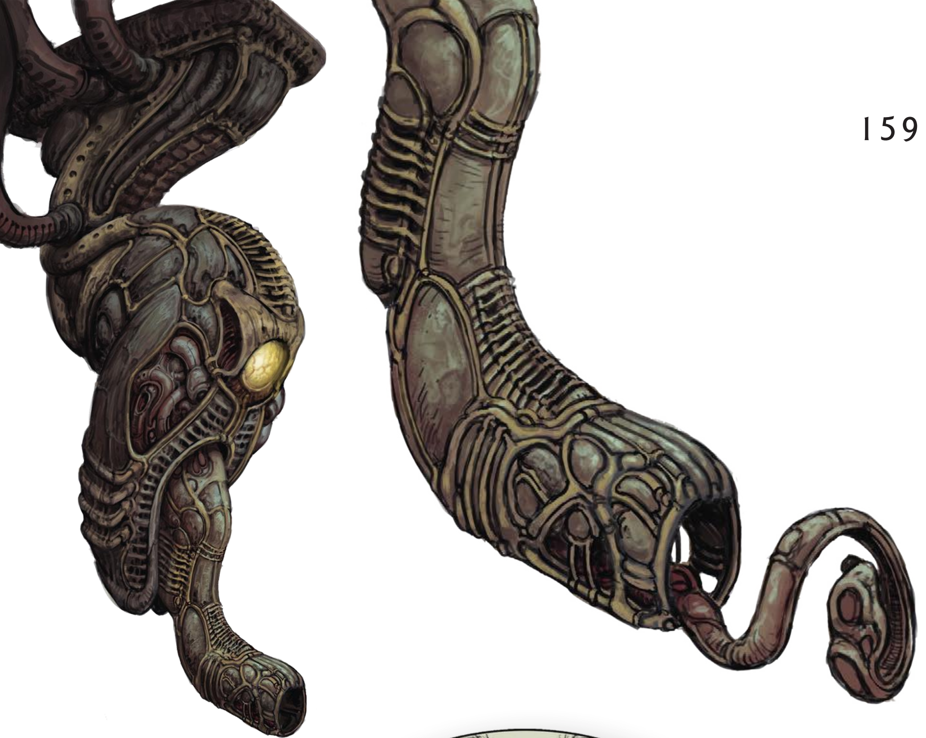
Clearly communicating the key's access permissions became a paramount goal during its concept revision process deeper into development. Acovic employed a simple triangular collection of lights as a universal locking system, with different configurations illuminated according to the lock, then detailed the spaces in between with bony growths with insidious connotations to better fit within *Scorn*'s world.

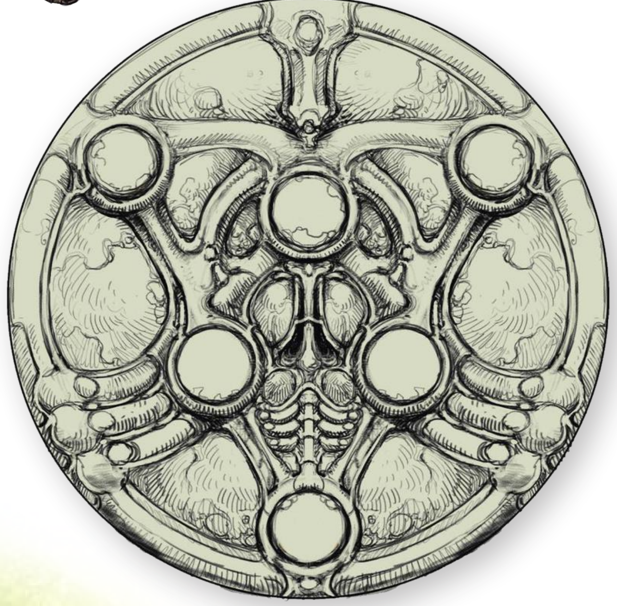
As the locking symbol was simplified, the key's housing grew more elaborate, developing into a remote control-like mesh of guts and protective shell features. This in turn required the industrial machines to give way to more complex creation devices, a shift from familiar drill press-like constructs to far stranger and more unsettling programming units.

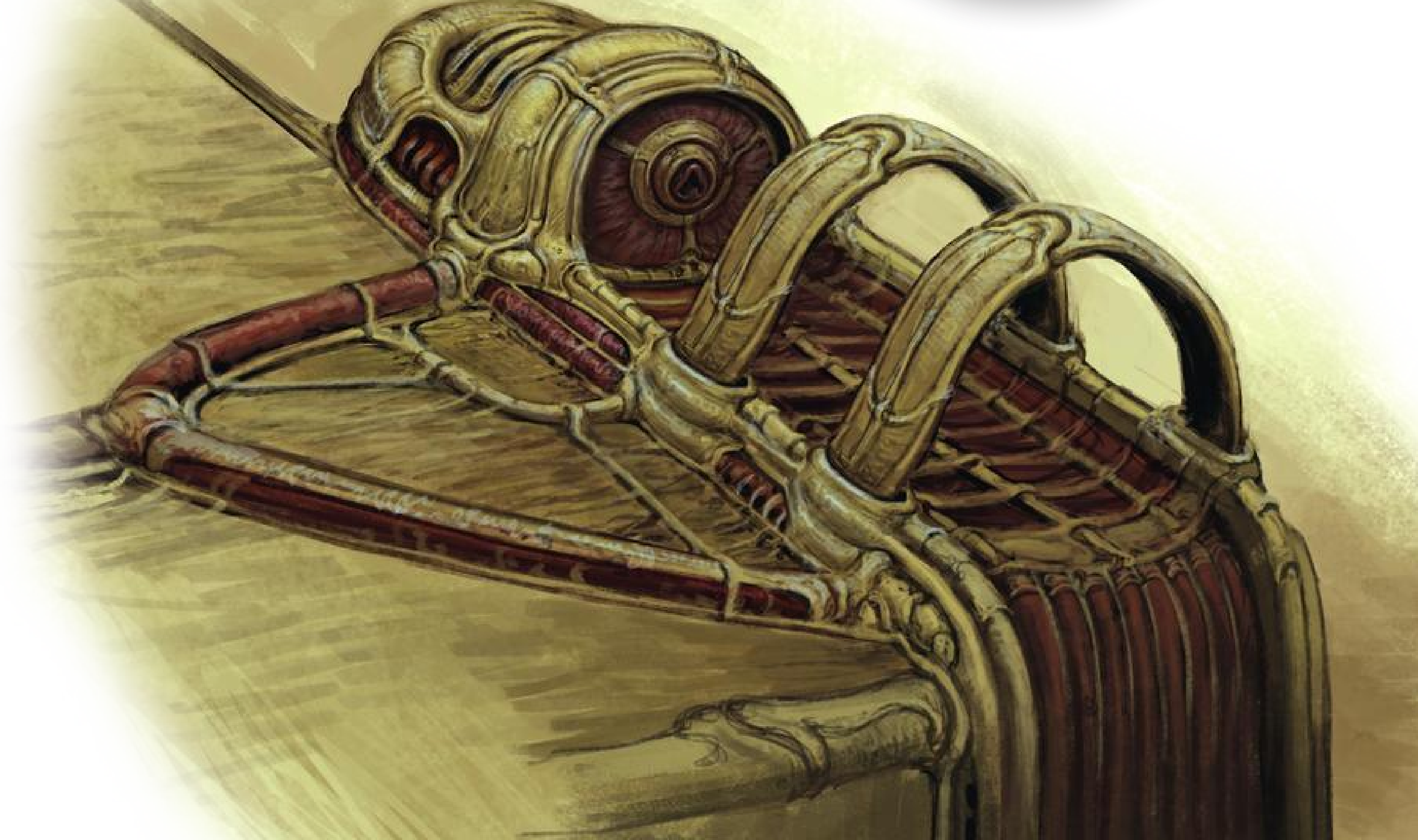


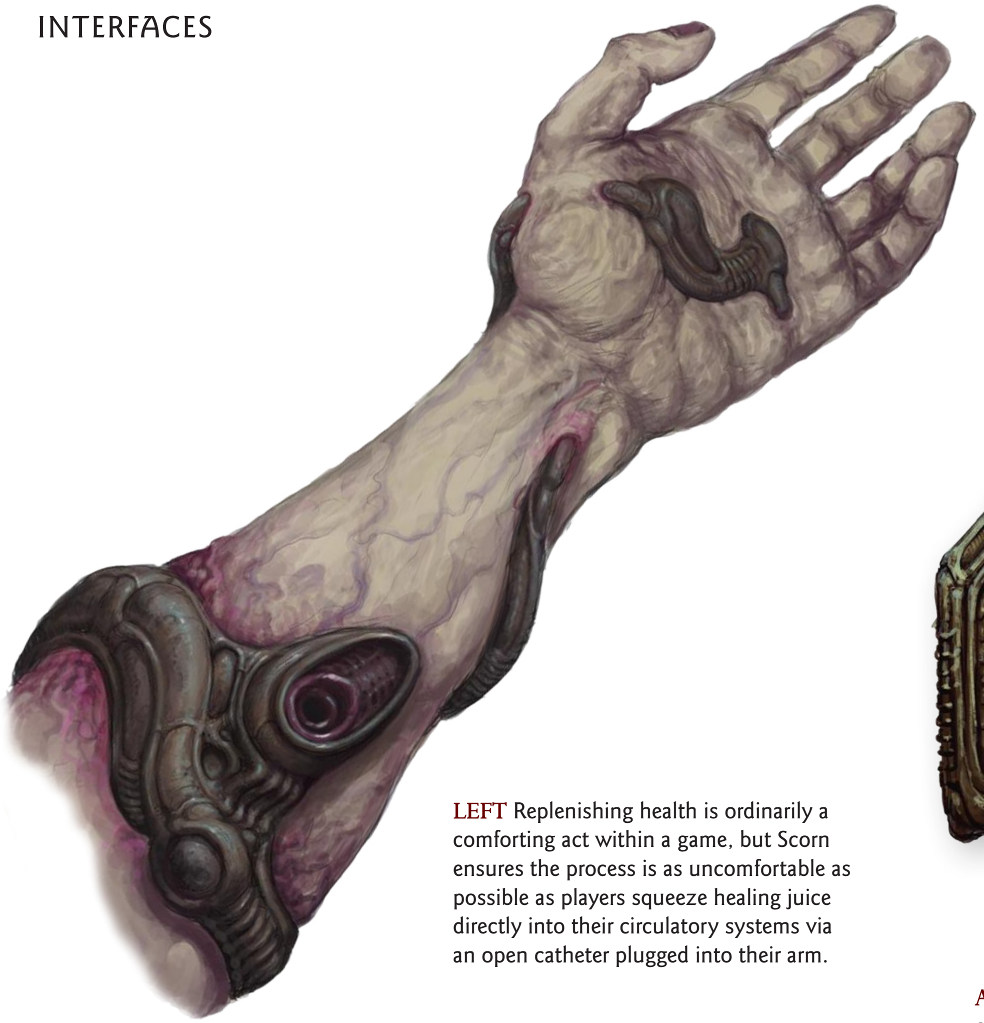
THIS SPREAD Primitive keys and locks (left) were reconceptualized as more evolved devices (below and bottom right). This was to create a more readable visual language that communicates progression requirements with ease in a world without words.



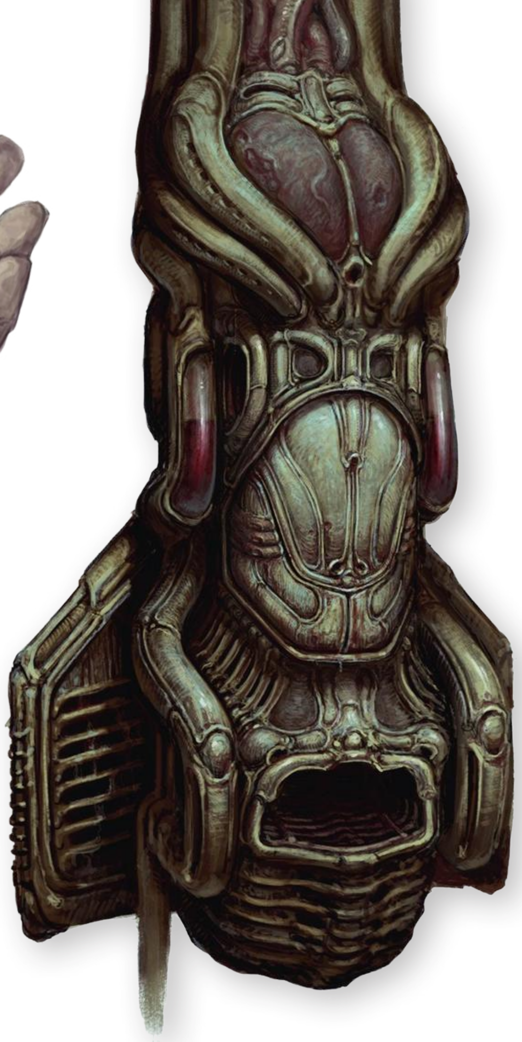




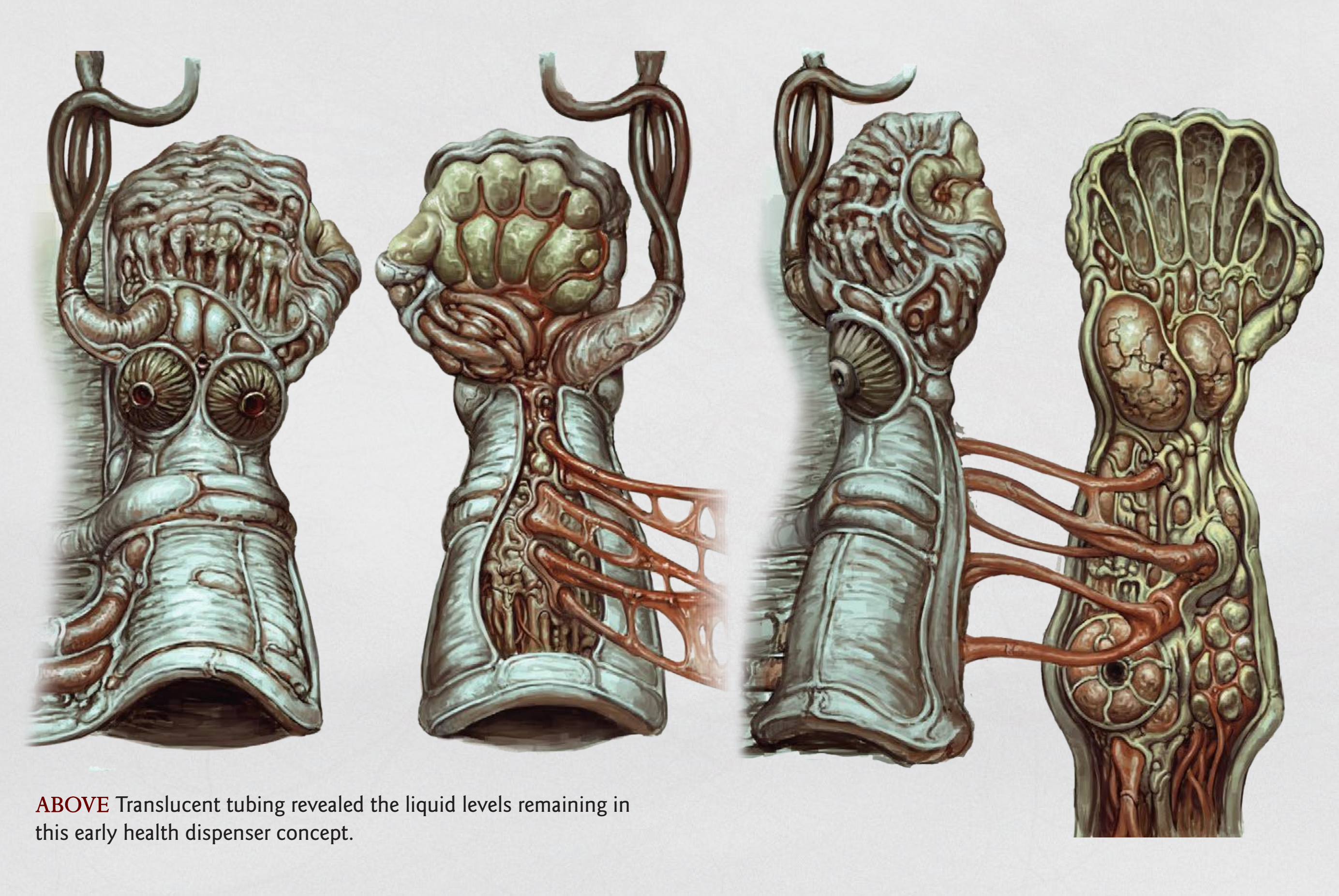




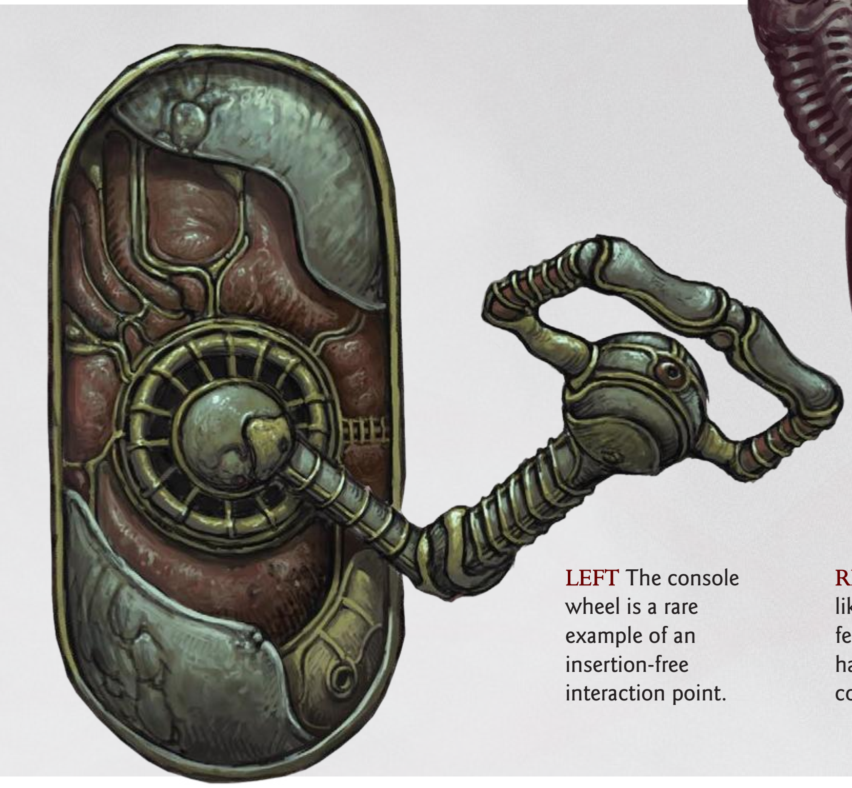
LEFT Replenishing health is ordinarily a comforting act within a game, but Scorn ensures the process is as uncomfortable as possible as players squeeze healing juice directly into their circulatory systems via an open catheter plugged into their arm.



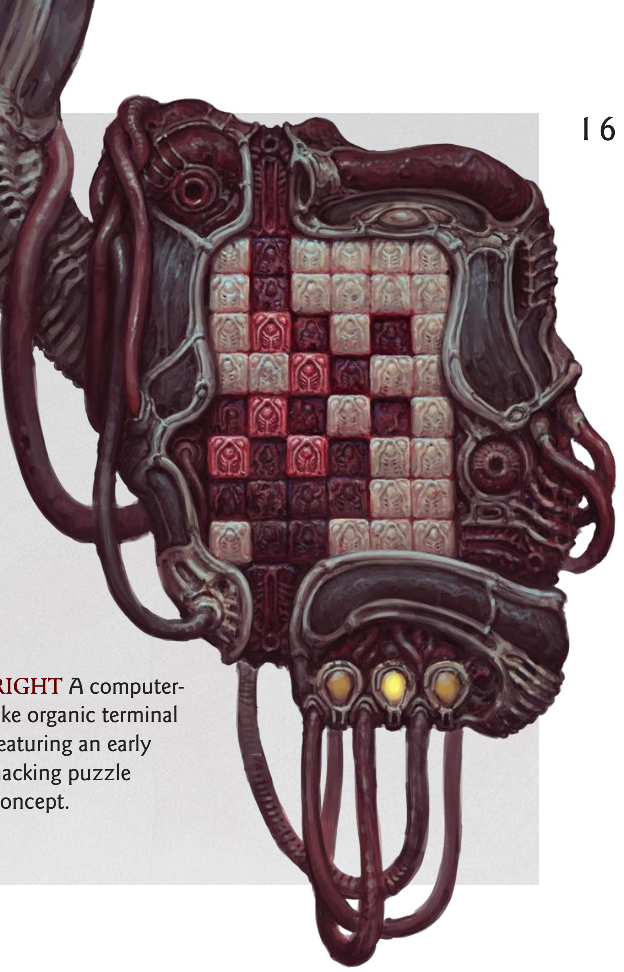
ABOVE Exploring the finer detailing of the console-mounted glove interfaces.



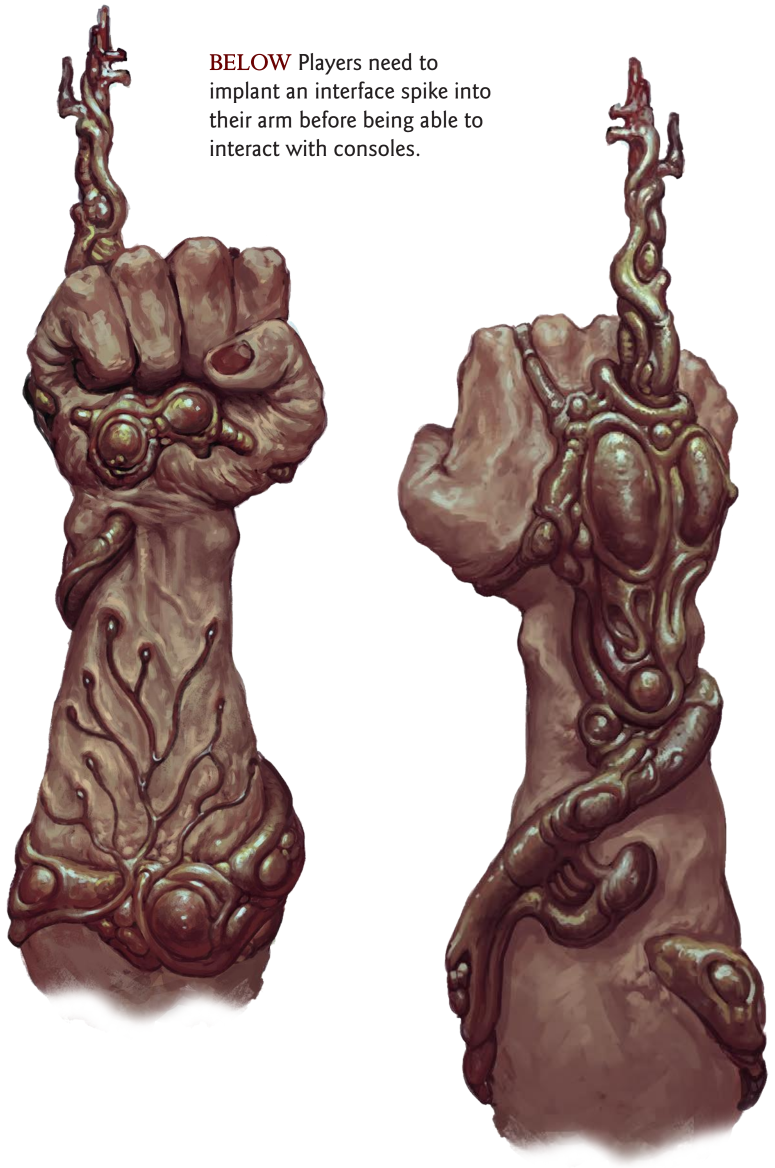
ABOVE Translucent tubing revealed the liquid levels remaining in this early health dispenser concept.



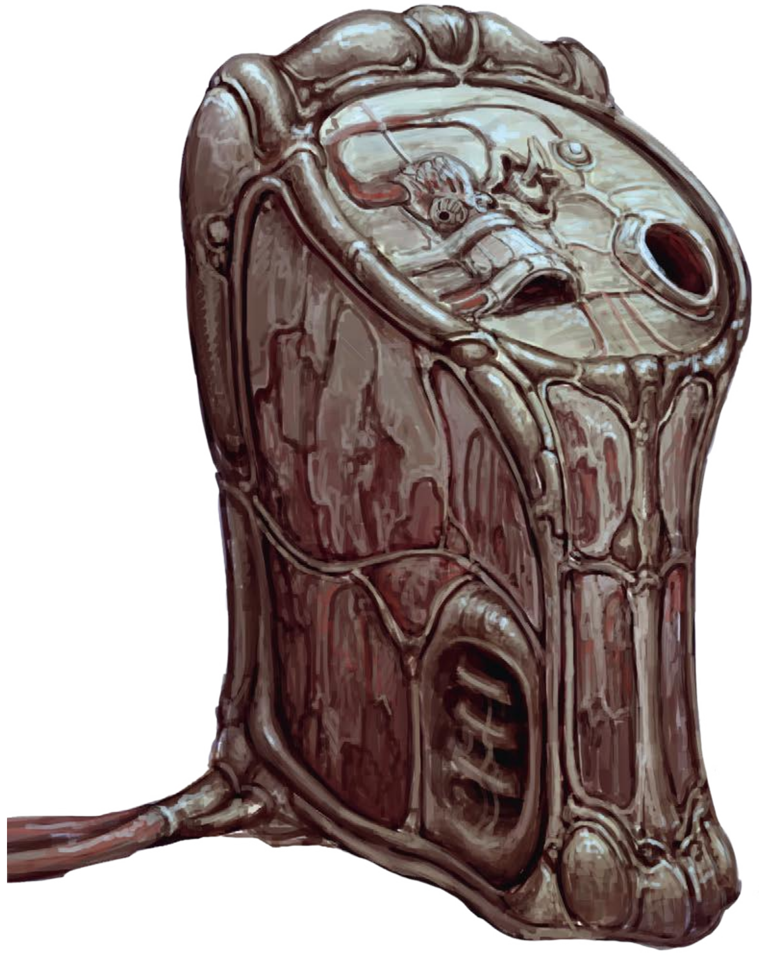
LEFT The console wheel is a rare example of an insertion-free interaction point.

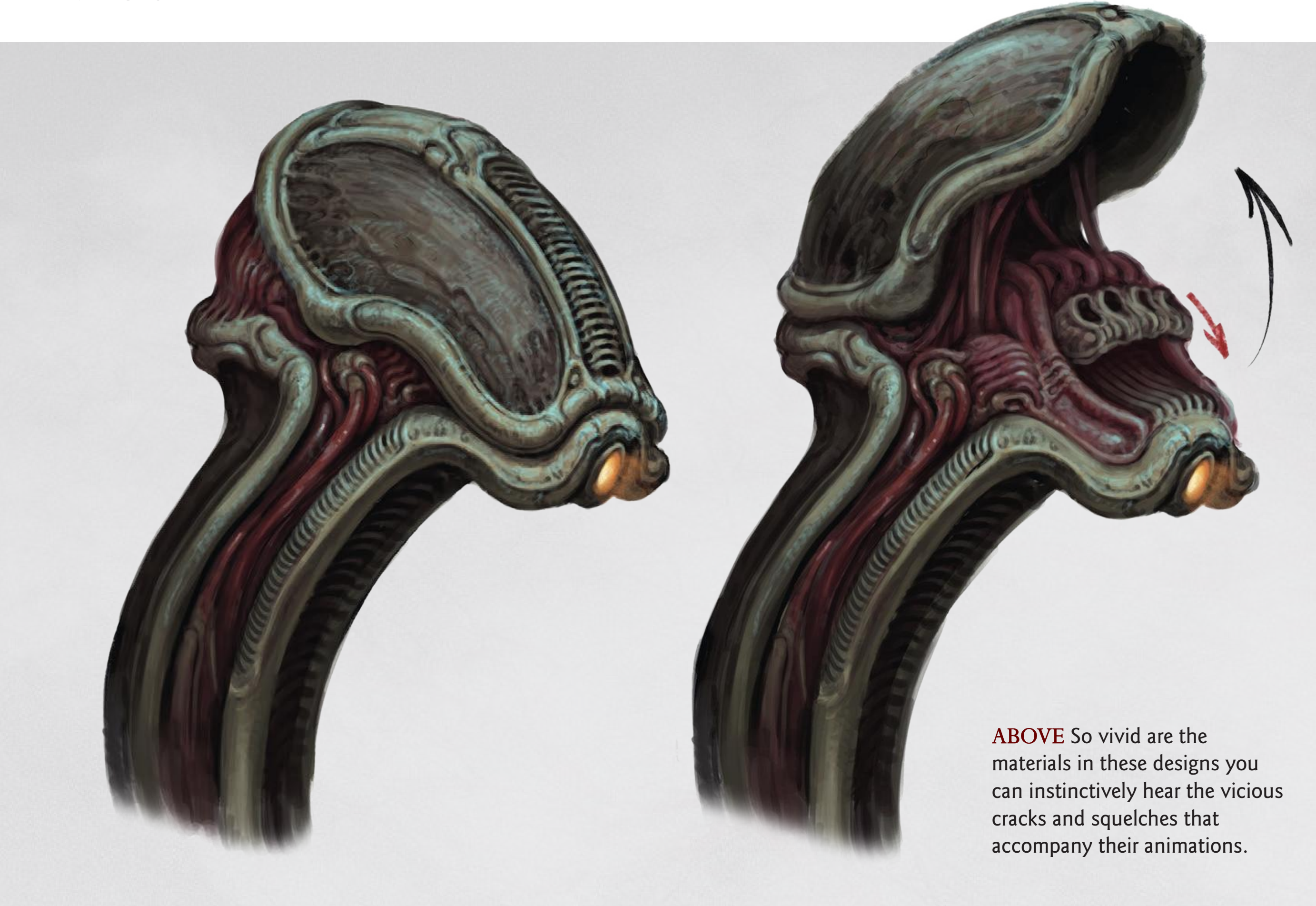


RIGHT A computer-like organic terminal featuring an early hacking puzzle concept.



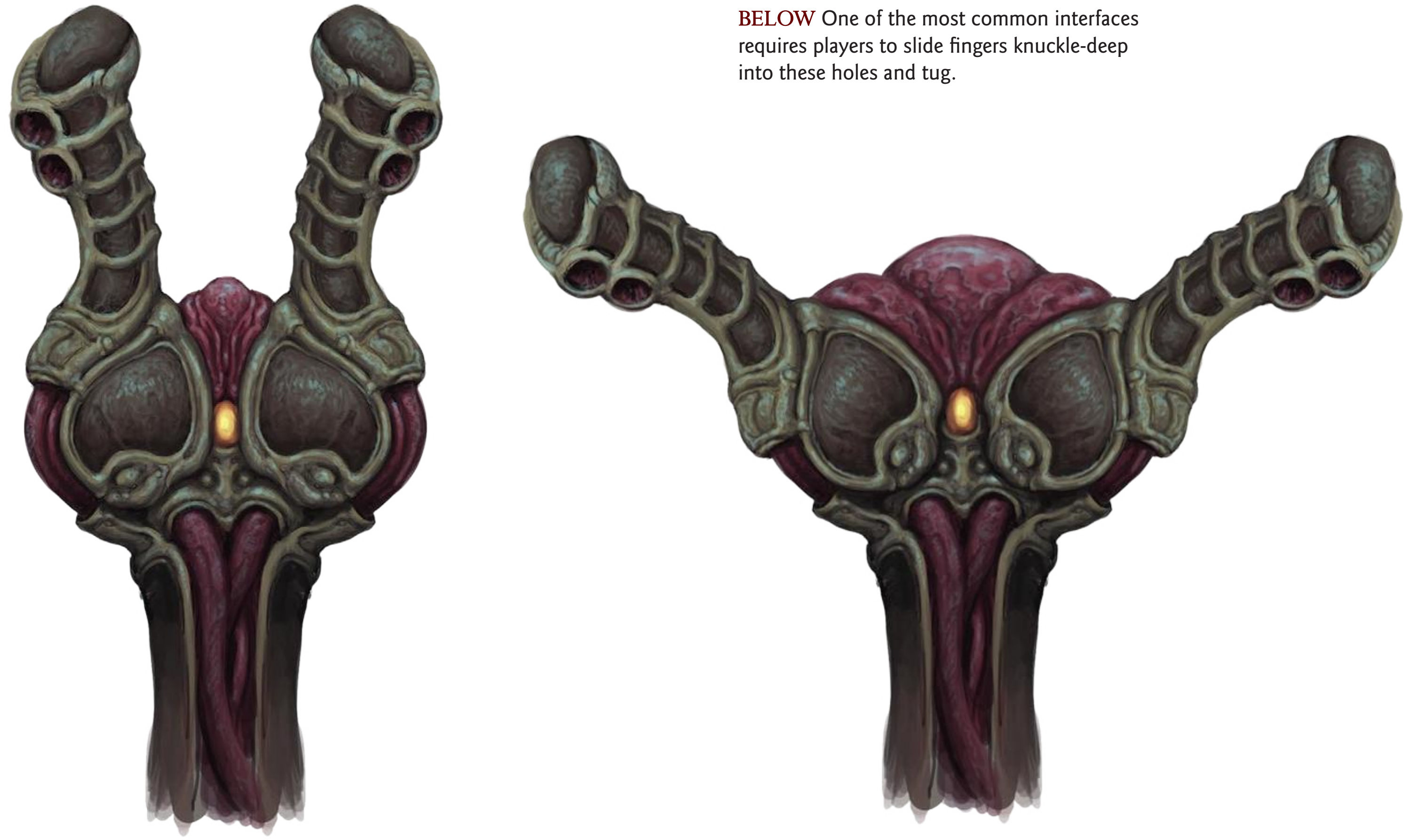
BELOW Players need to implant an interface spike into their arm before being able to interact with consoles.

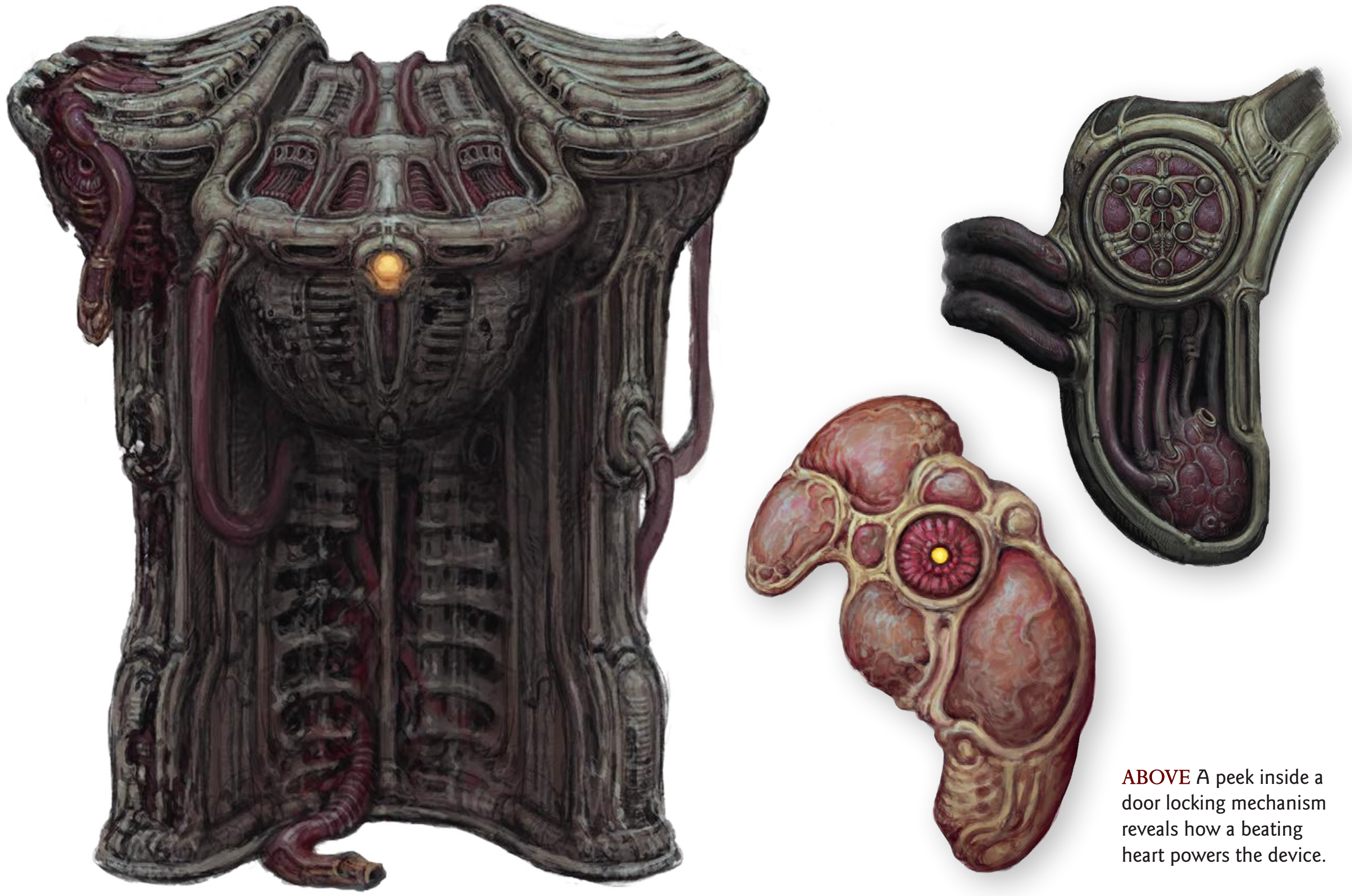




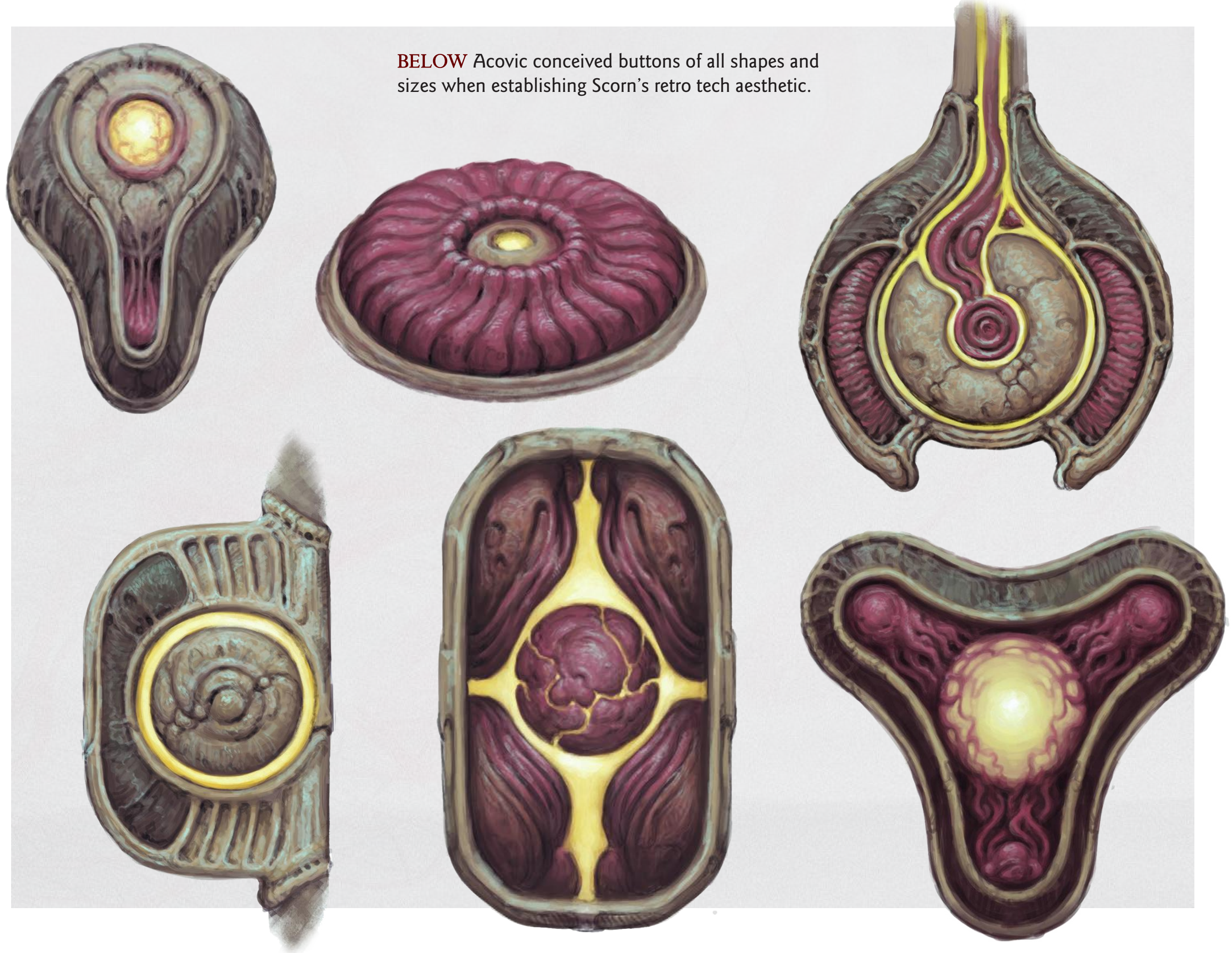
ABOVE So vivid are the materials in these designs you can instinctively hear the vicious cracks and squelches that accompany their animations.

BELOW One of the most common interfaces requires players to slide fingers knuckle-deep into these holes and tug.





ABOVE A peek inside a door locking mechanism reveals how a beating heart powers the device.

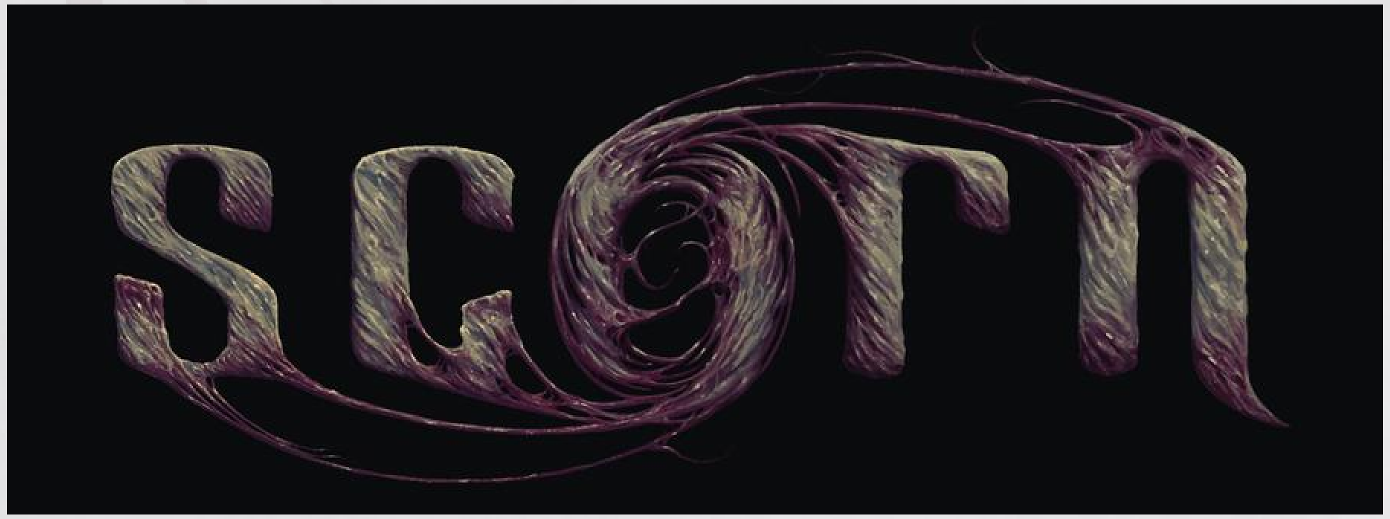


BELOW Acovic conceived buttons of all shapes and sizes when establishing Scorn's retro tech aesthetic.

LOGO VARIATIONS

Scorn's final logo is as unique as it is visceral, with curved chunks of osseous matter rent from creatures unknown, fragments of cartilage and skin still attached as it's shaped into the required letters. Yet the original logo passes were vastly different. Both feature more recognizable letter fonts spiraling out from the central "O" in *Scorn*: The first logo imagines the letters as fleshy growths with bloody tendrils connecting the type shoulders and stems to the central point, the second pass opting for a more solid interpretation in the form of a cracked and worn stone effect.

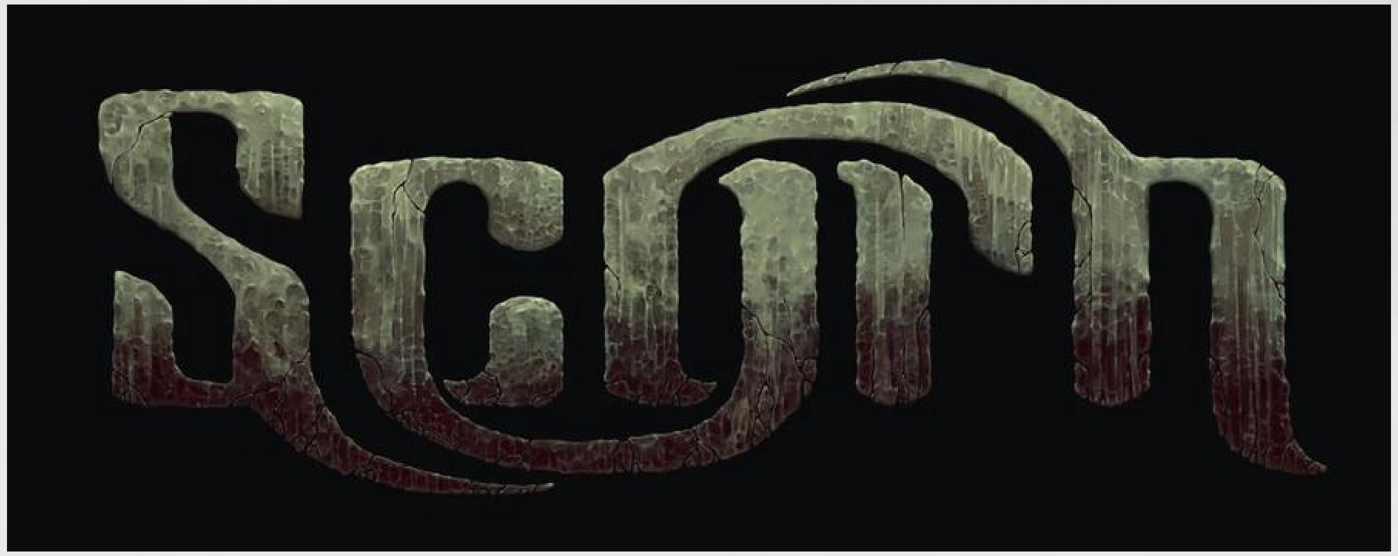
BELOW It's possible to imagine the central "O" slowly spinning anti-clockwise, pulling the skin and muscle fibers of neighboring letters to breaking point.



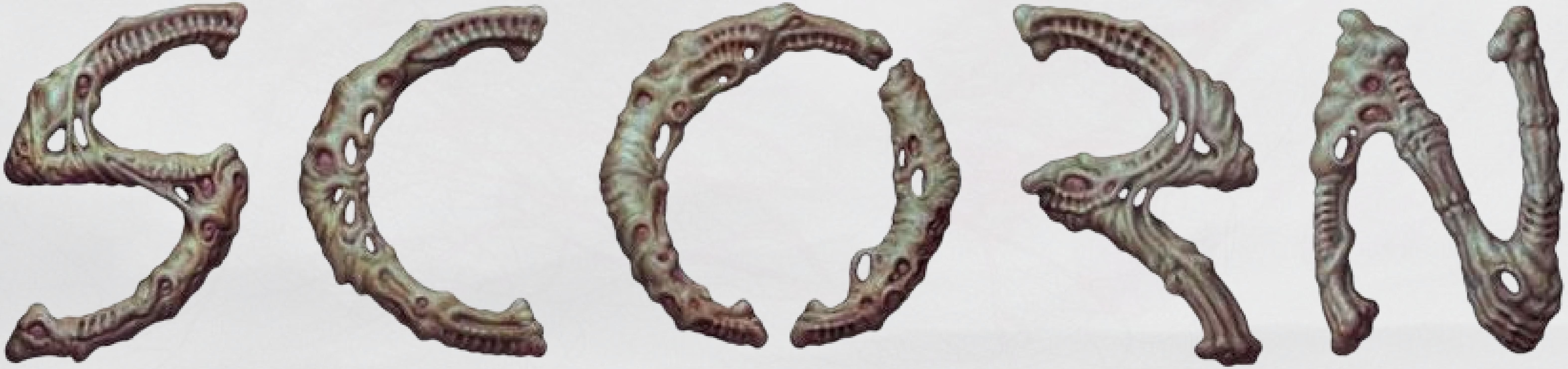
"It was really tough," reflects game director Ljubomir Peklar. "These passes didn't work with solid color backgrounds. You have to put them in context to work, and they have to be big to be legible."

"We wanted something more concrete than regular letters with decaying layers upon them," says concept artist Filip Acovic when talking about the decision to start over from scratch on the logo's lettering. "Something that resembles solid objects and not just textured letters."

BELOW An alternative take on Scorn's title involved letters chiseled from a wall, with a color gradient that depicted an accumulation of blood and dirt at its base.



BELOW The final logo treatment transforms the letters into objects you could conceivably find scattered in the world: tangible items torn from the carcasses of creatures.



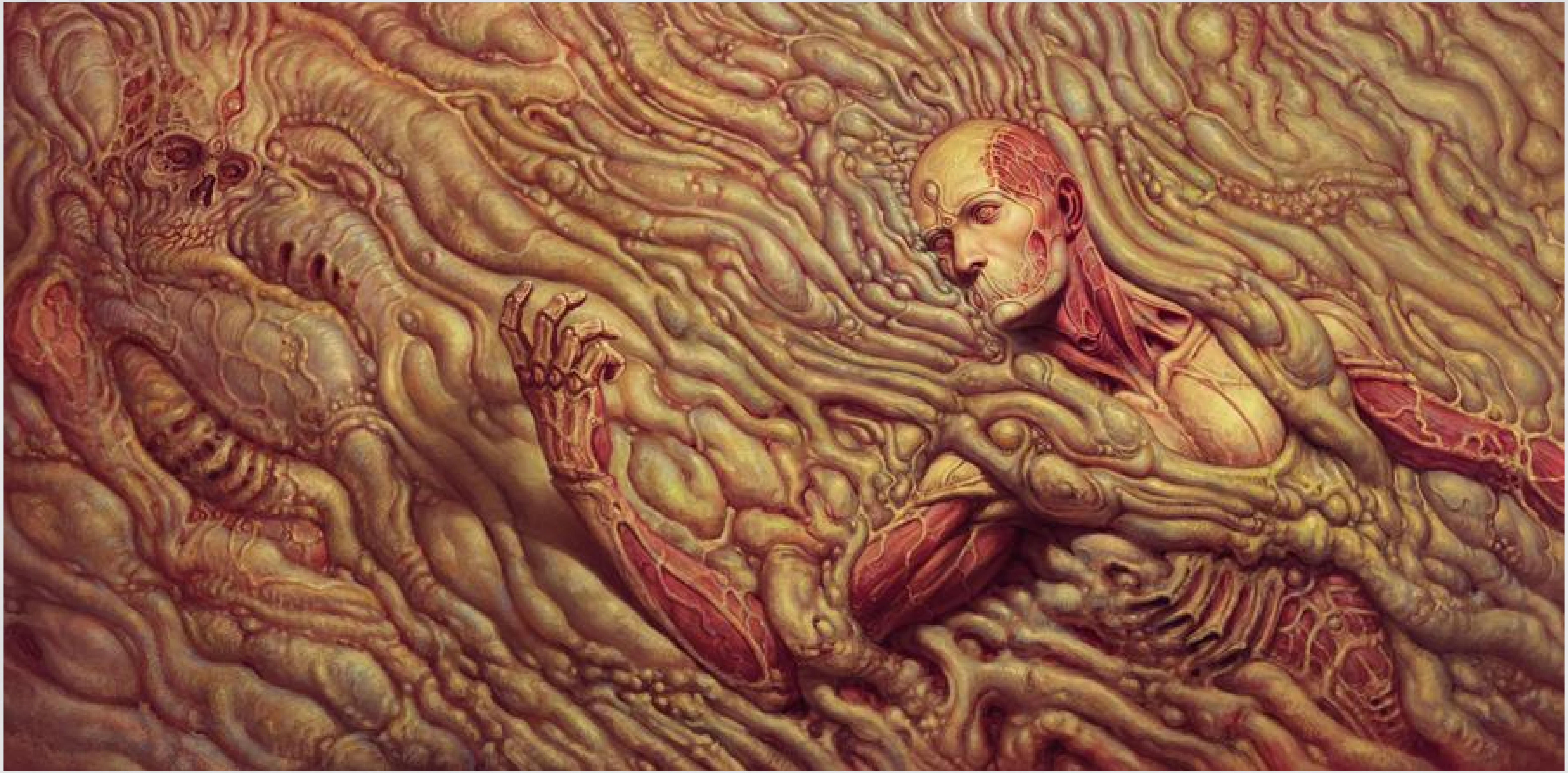
SCORN

PROMOS AND COVERS

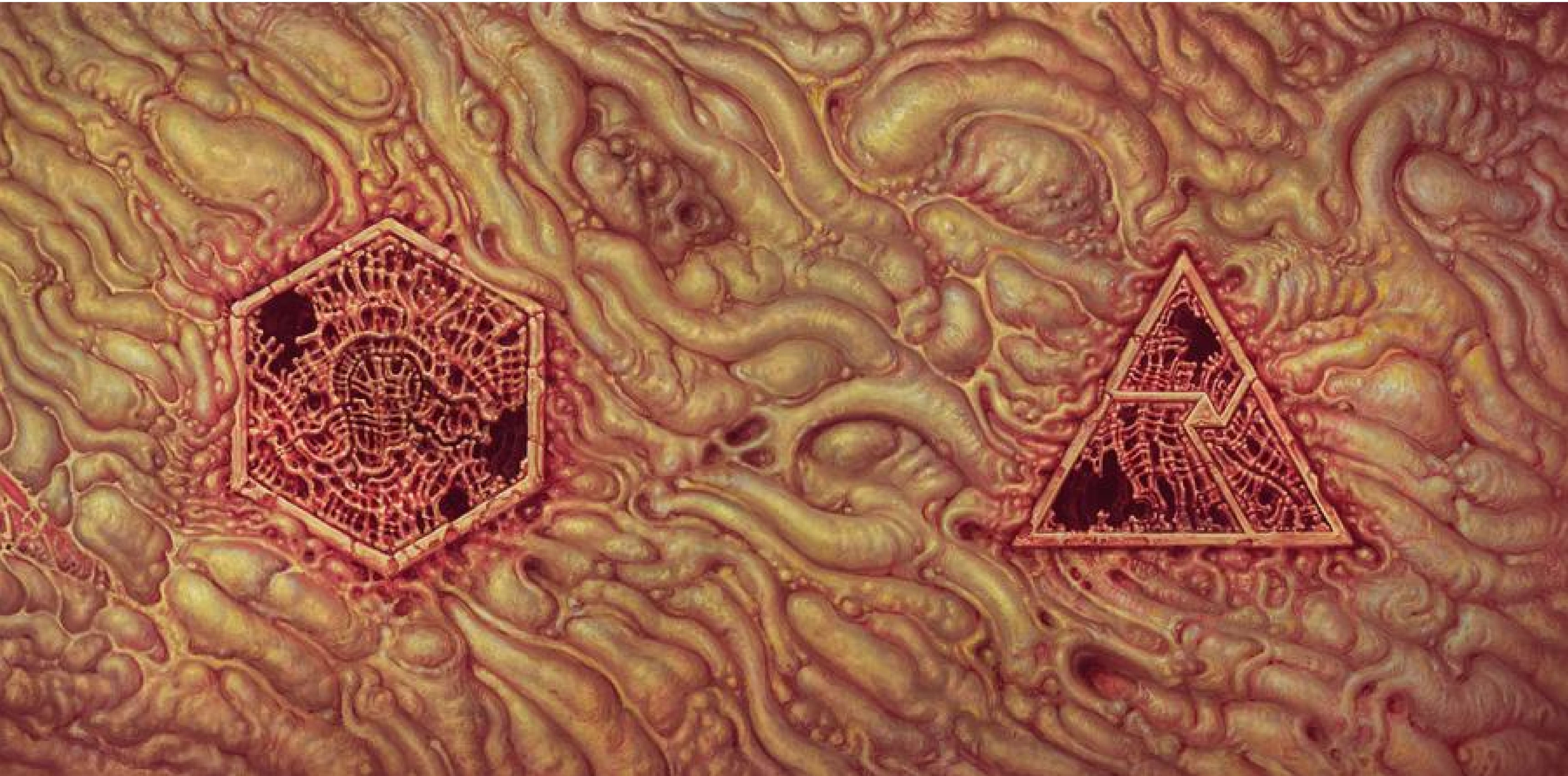
A game's cover art is the single most important image when it comes to capturing would-be-players' attention and wordlessly communicating its concepts to them. Good cover art must make people want to learn more about the game within.

And, as you should know by now, having looked over the other pages in this book, *Scorn* isn't a game short of arresting artwork and designs. So, what made this artwork (shown in full on the previous pages) the perfect piece?

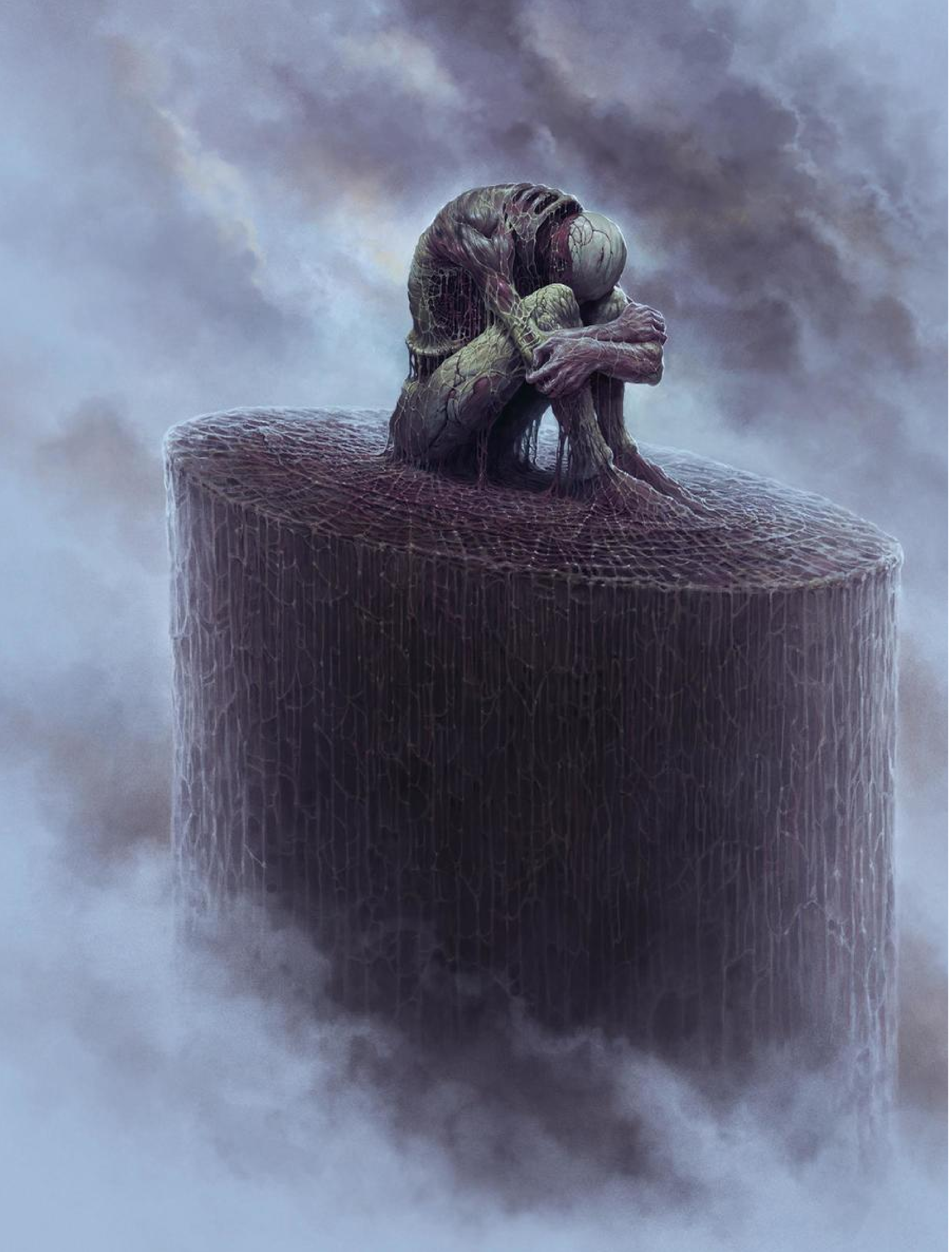
BELOW The vinyl cover art wasn't originally designed to be used in this way. Concept artist Filip Acovic had an idea to draw a figure drowning in a parasitic substance as a standalone concept, but after showing his work to game director Ljubomir Peklar a decision was quickly made. "Once he created the piece I said, 'Okay, that's our vinyl cover. That's it,'" reminisces Peklar.

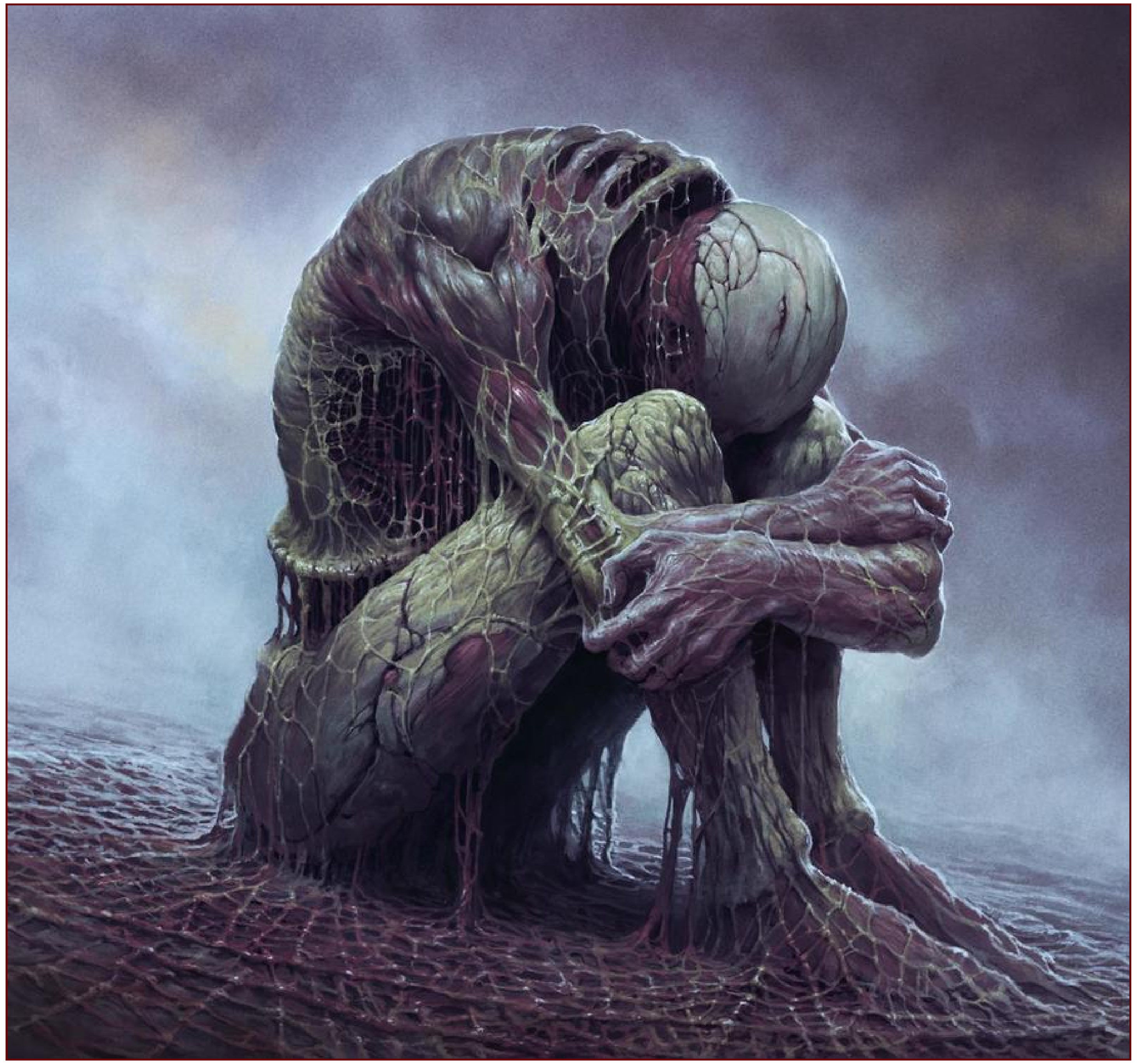


"It represents the main themes of the game well," explains concept artist Filip Acovic. "The fusion of flesh and technology, the decaying world we are thrust into, and the only possible conclusion for civilization reaching its peak. The contraptions they are connected to suggest the ambition of overcoming their humanity, and their physical selves, but simultaneously, they are trapped in this technological nightmare engineered to be their salvation. It is a constant pressure, and they are literally cracking under the weight of it all."



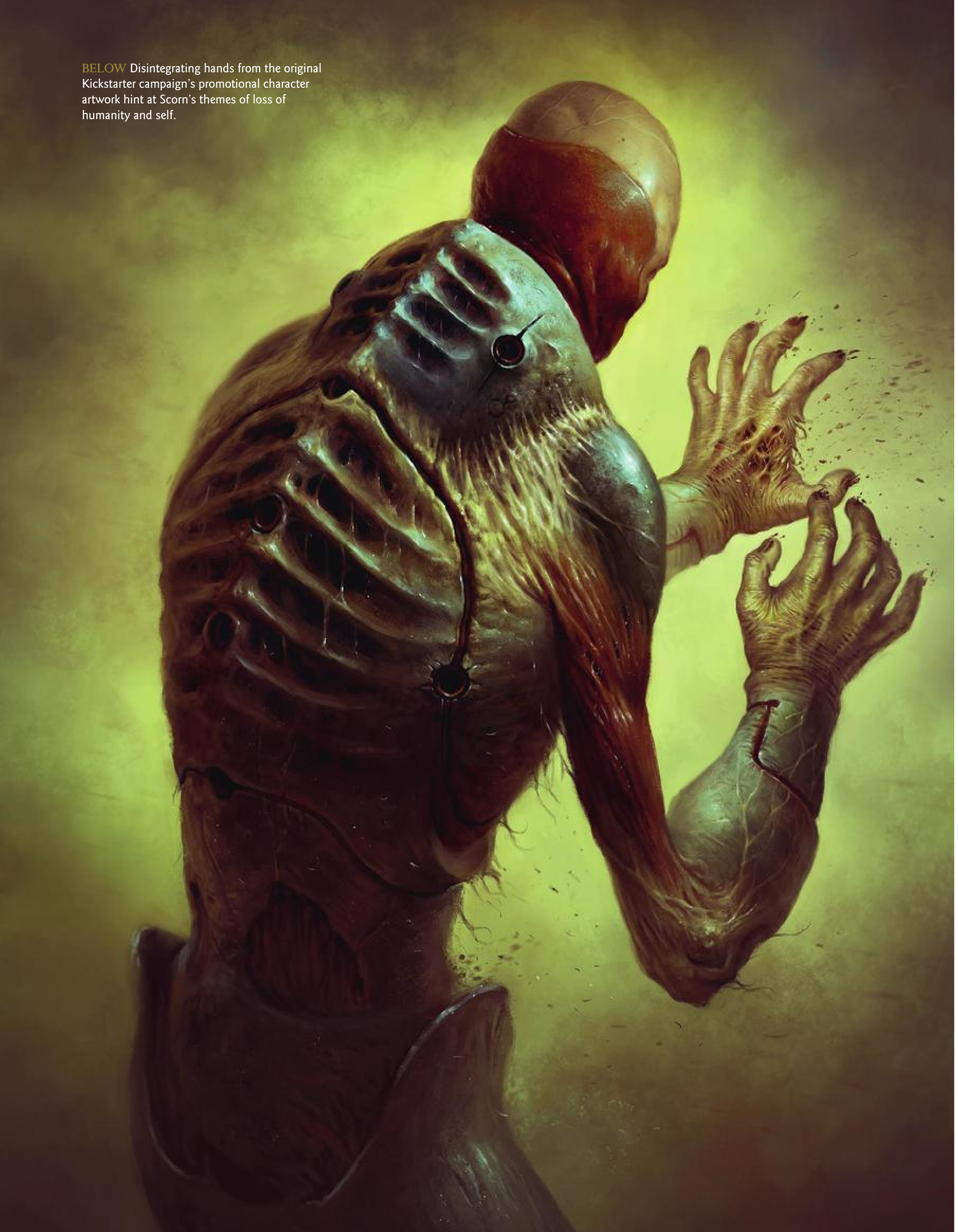
BELOW The symbols engulfed by the parasitic substance belong to the artists ΔΞΤΗΞΚ (Aethek) and Lustmord, but that's as much information as the vinyl cover will divulge as, like the game itself, you'll find no text offering further explanation. "You will see the symbols on each side and that's all," says Peklar. "You don't know the track listing. You just put the record on and enjoy the music."



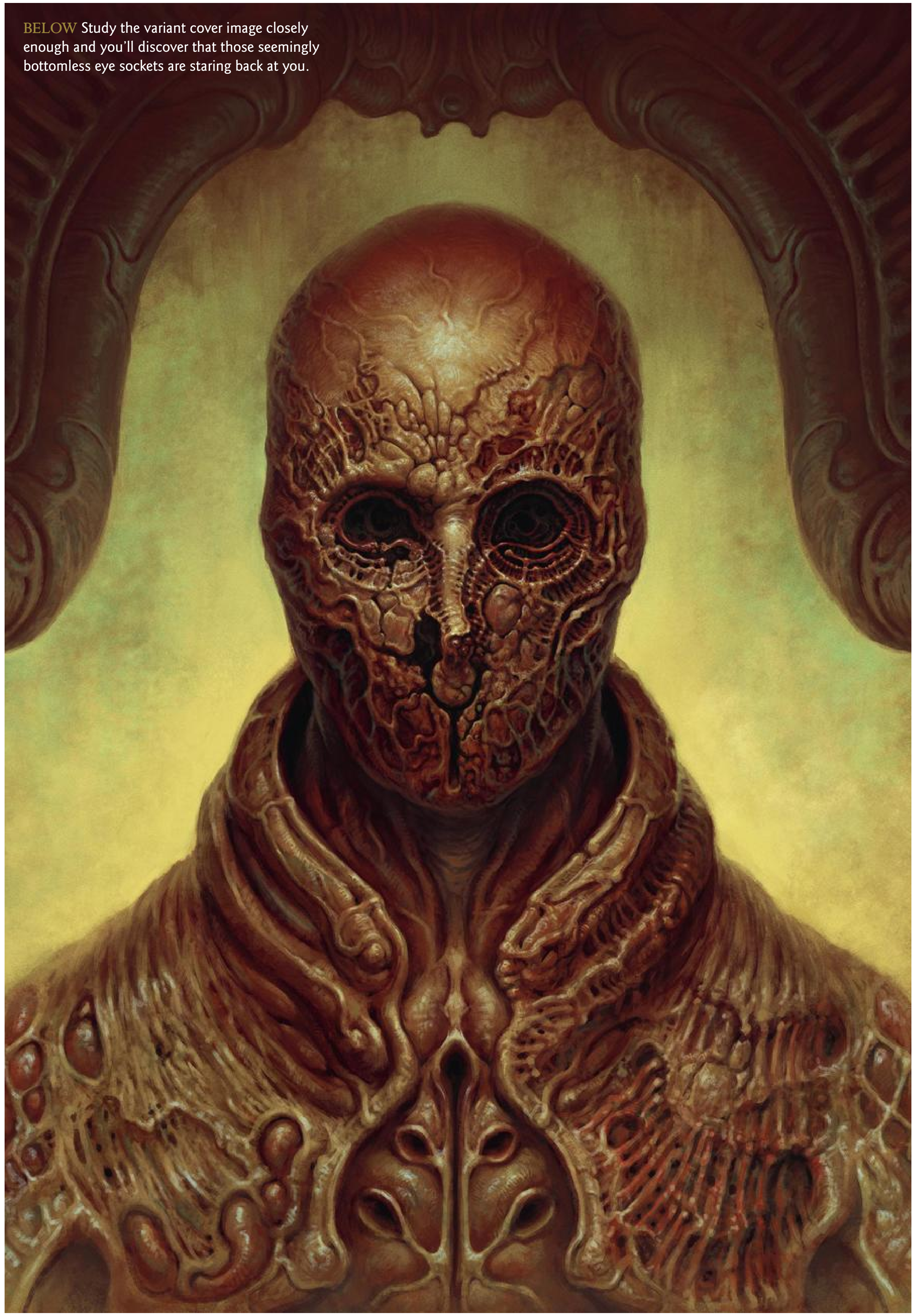


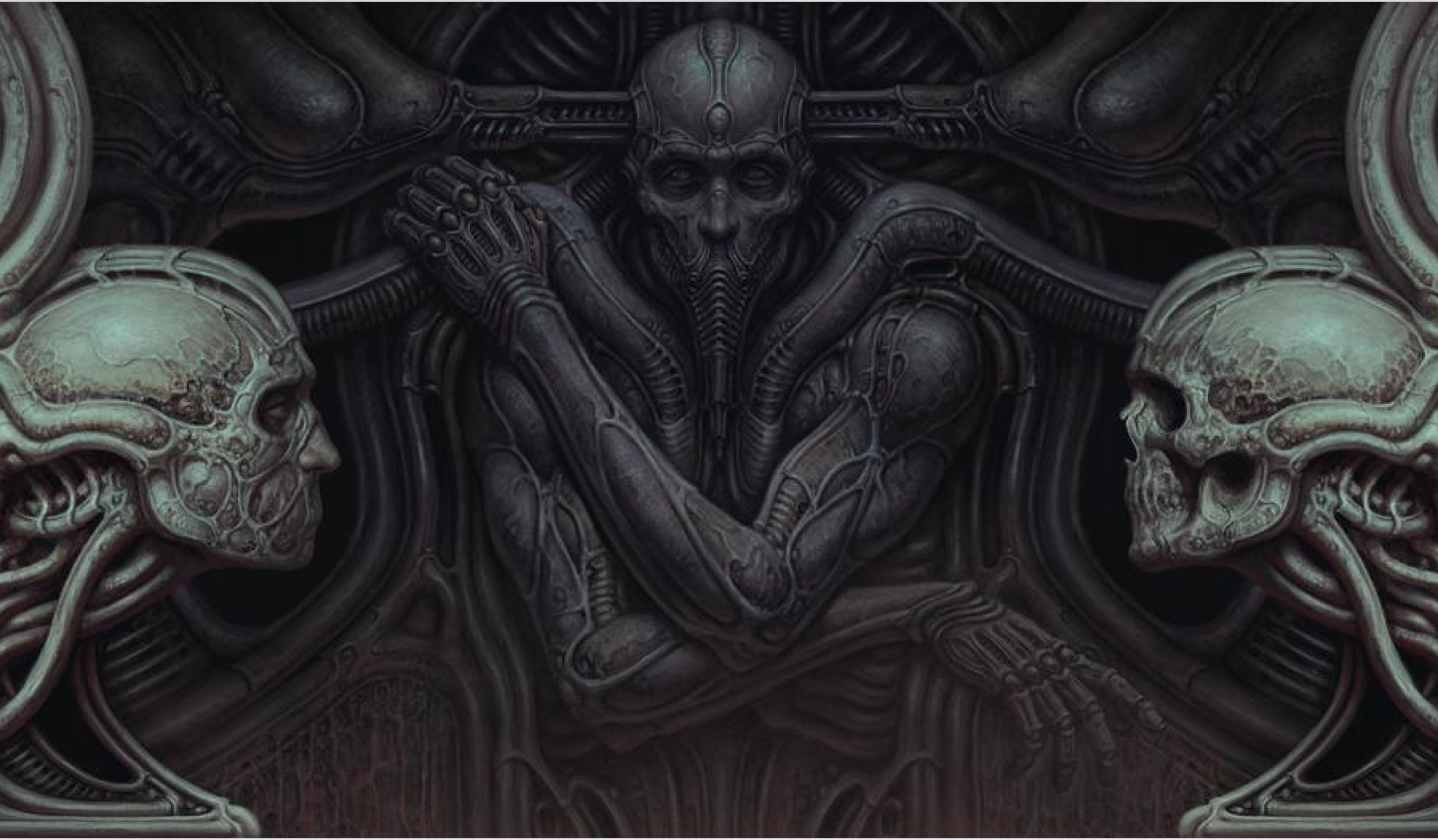
THIS SPREAD With vulnerability high on the list of necessary attributes for the protagonist, it was only natural for concept artist Filip Acovic to depict him in a fetal position. This artwork was also transformed into a figurine for Kickstarter backers.

BELOW Disintegrating hands from the original Kickstarter campaign's promotional character artwork hint at Scorn's themes of loss of humanity and self.

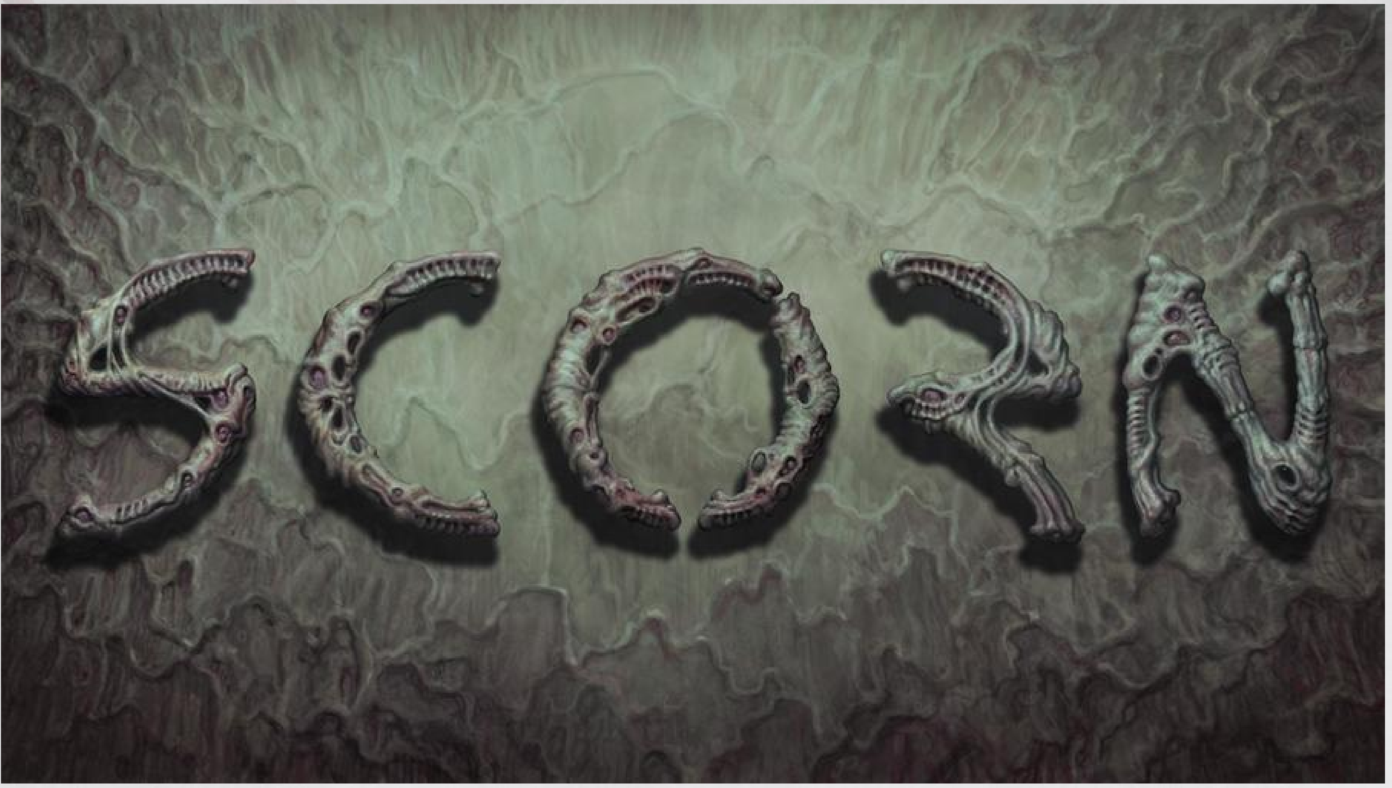


BELOW Study the variant cover image closely enough and you'll discover that those seemingly bottomless eye sockets are staring back at you.



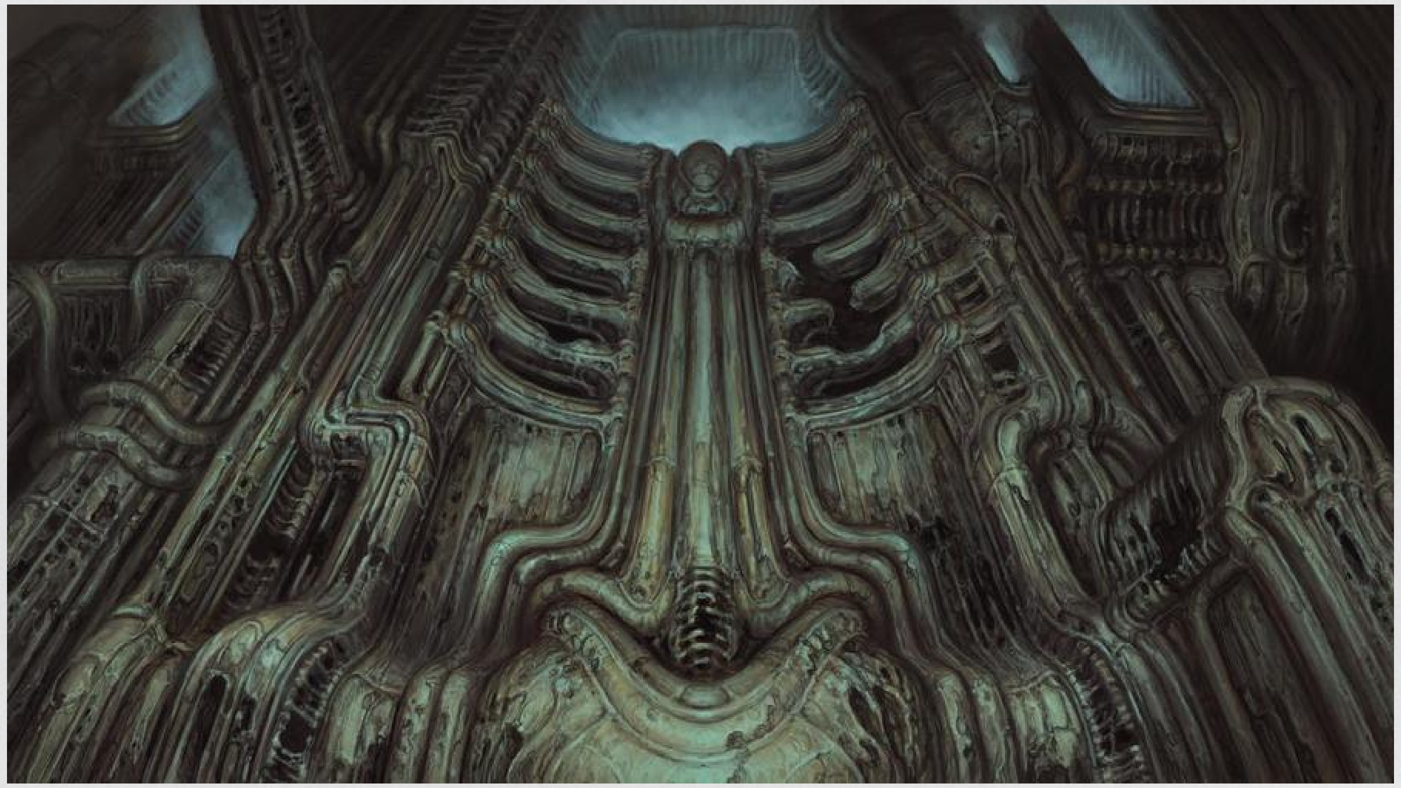


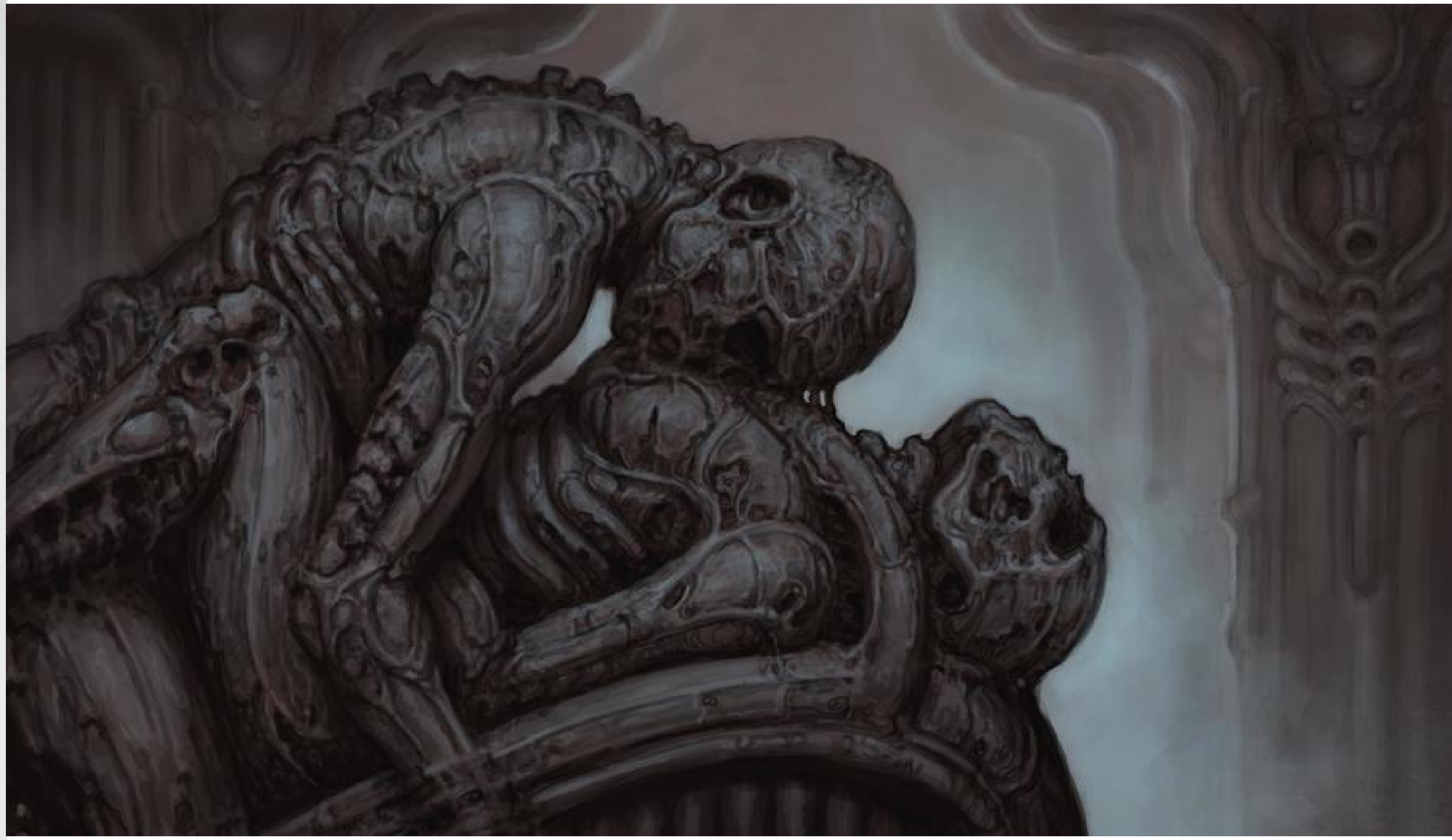
TRAILERS



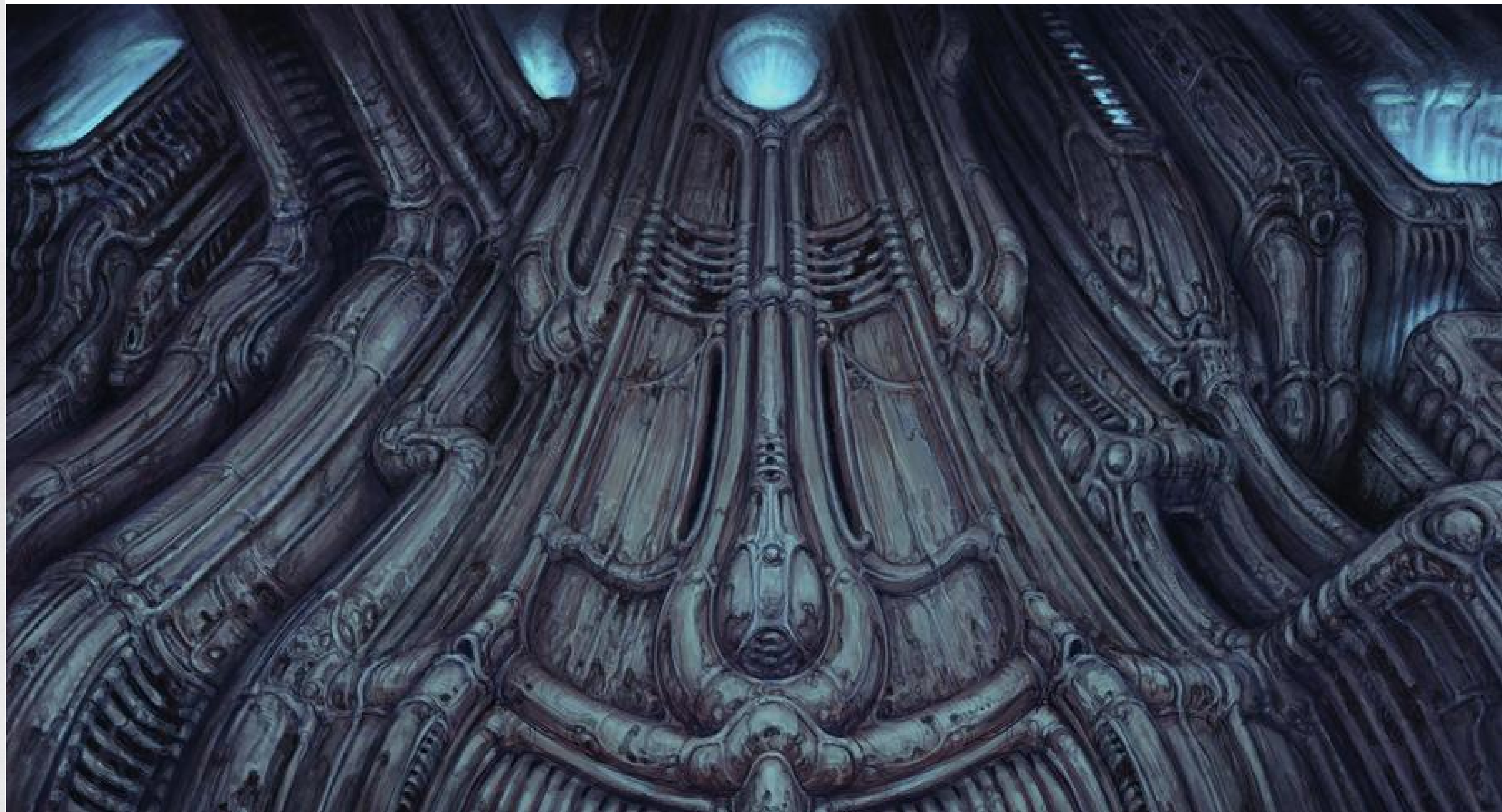
ABOVE The final logo first appeared in the 2016 Teaser Trailer, as an older concept appeared in 2014's pre-alpha footage.

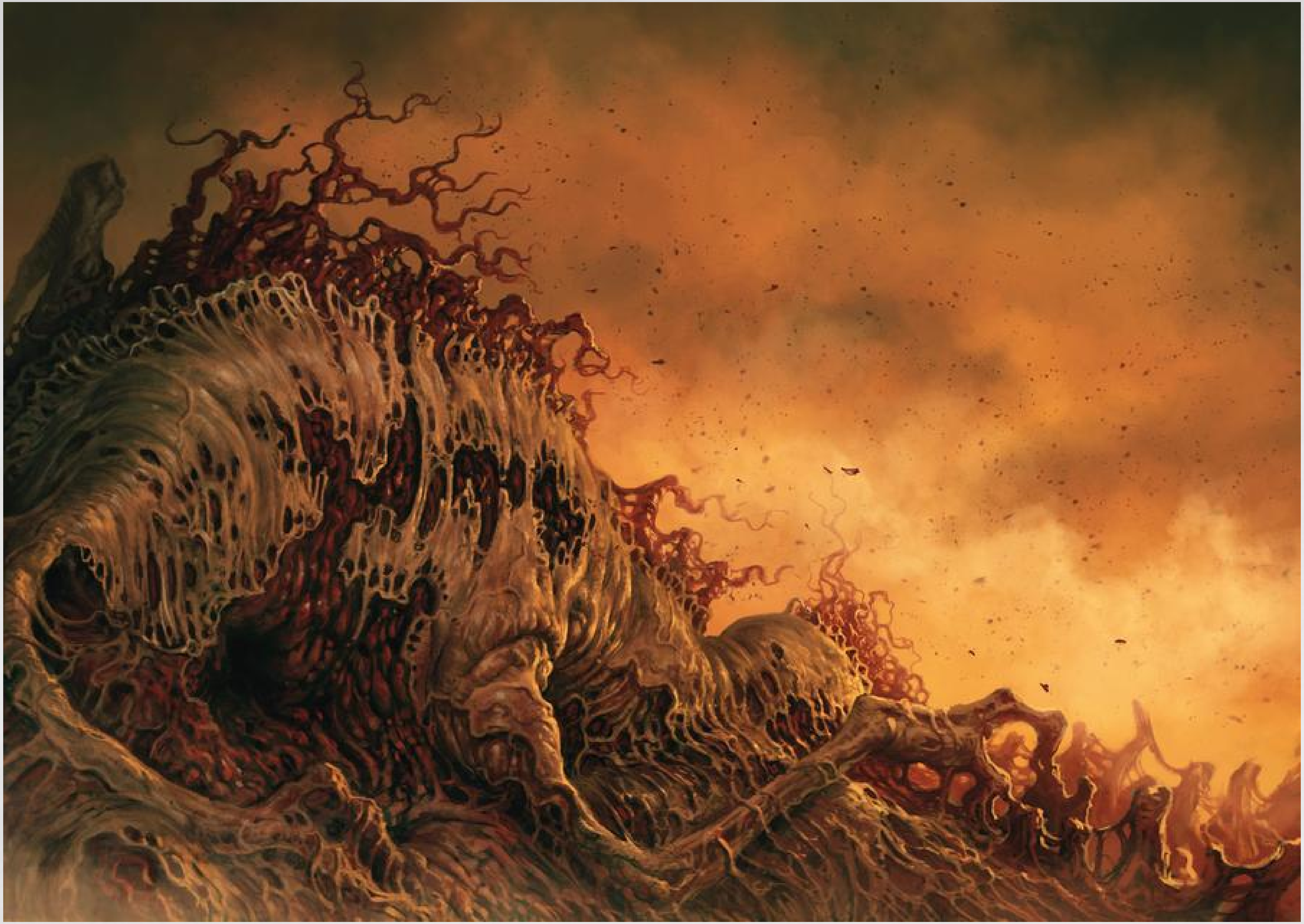
BELOW AND BELOW RIGHT Two slightly different takes on a panning shot to set the scene. The bottom image, with more intricate detailing and less visible erosion, is the design adopted for the trailer.



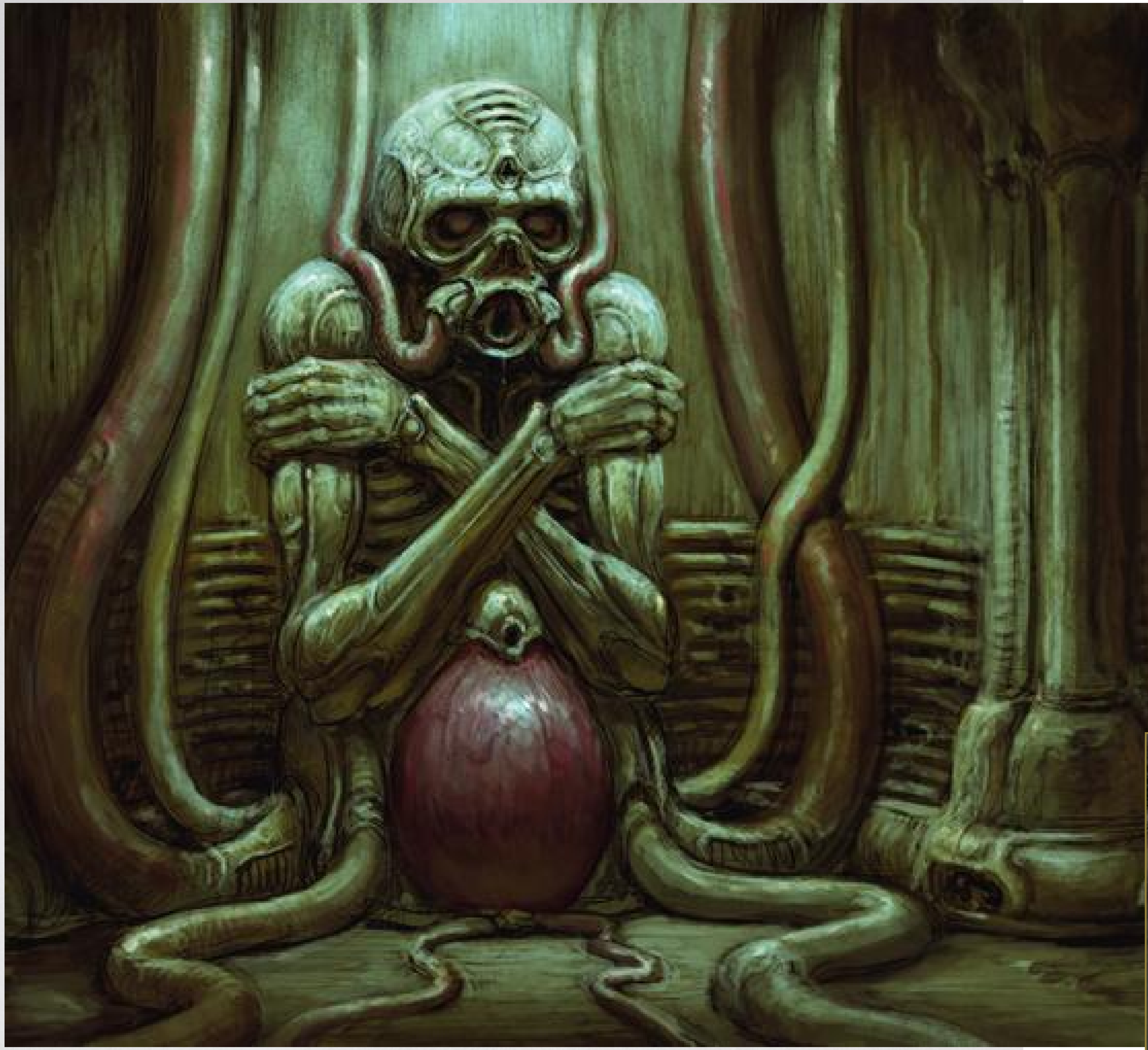


ABOVE A close panning shot of this copulating couple smartly complements the running themes of both birth and rebirth in the 2020 Xbox Series X trailer, though the scene is cropped before the camera moves below waist-height.



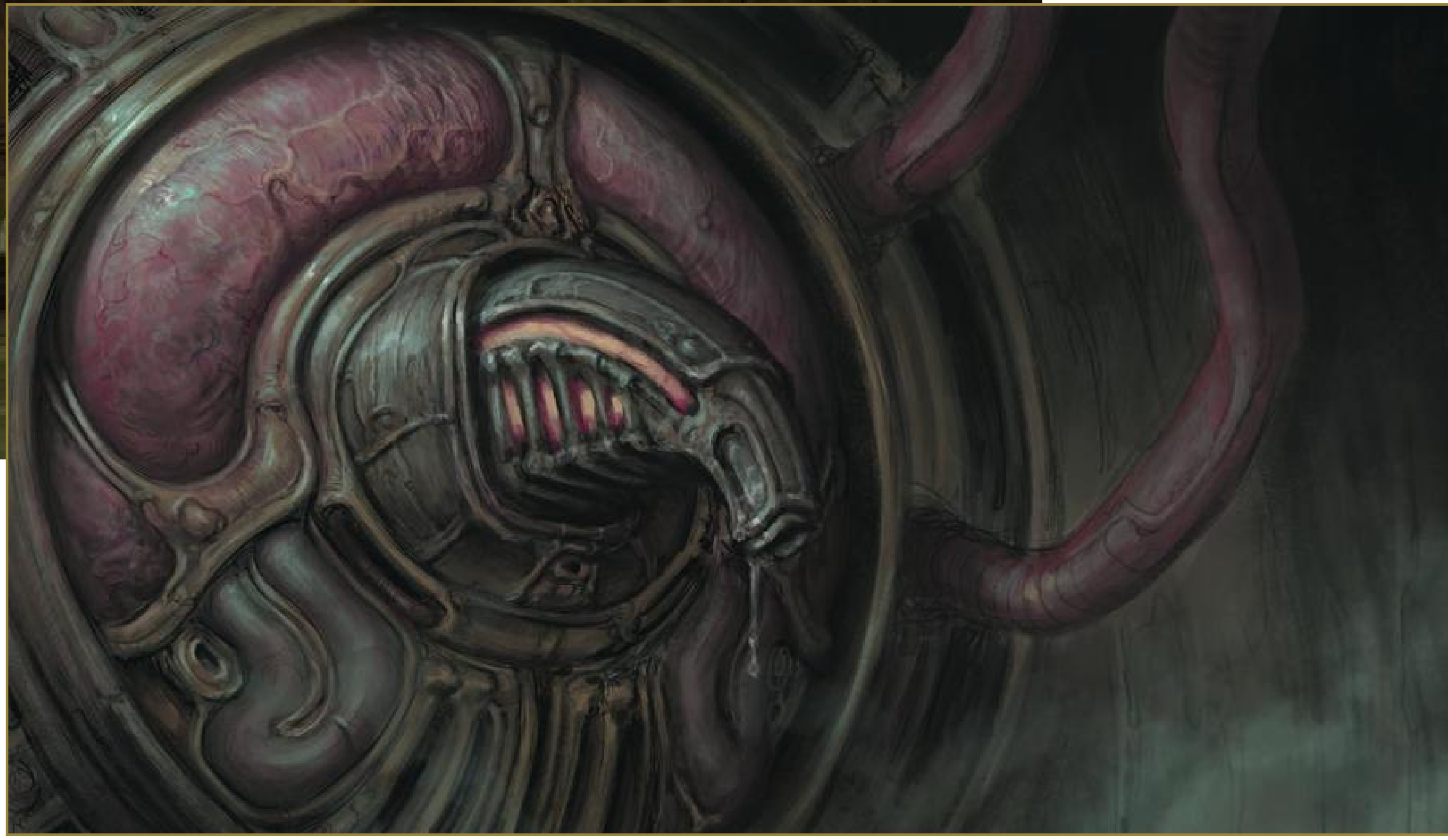


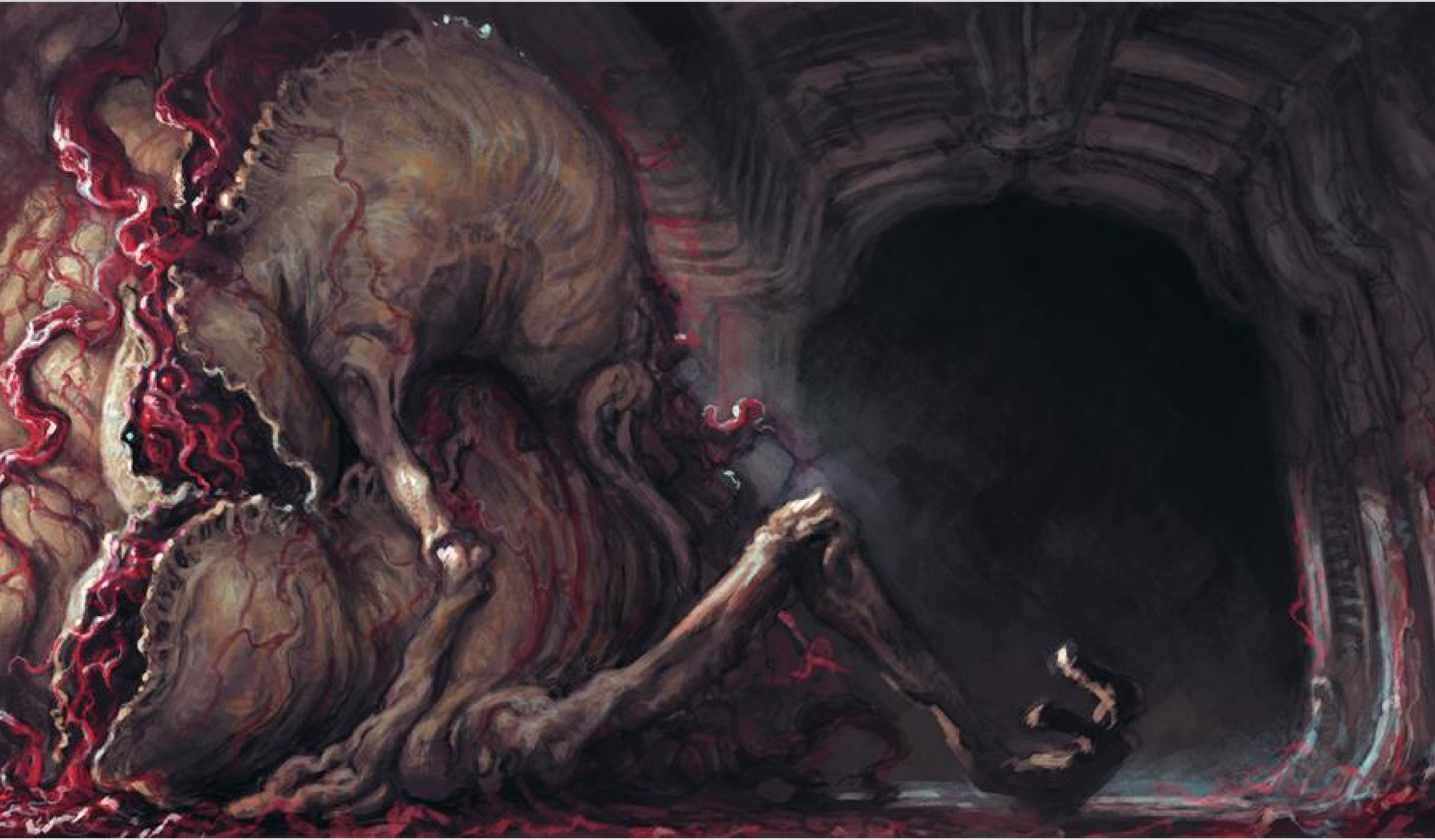
RIGHT The 2017 Gameplay Trailer opens with a lingering shot of this dead creature lying out in the Field, bloodied tendrils fluttering in the winds. It was chosen for the opening frames to communicate themes of death, plus the concept of a world moved on.



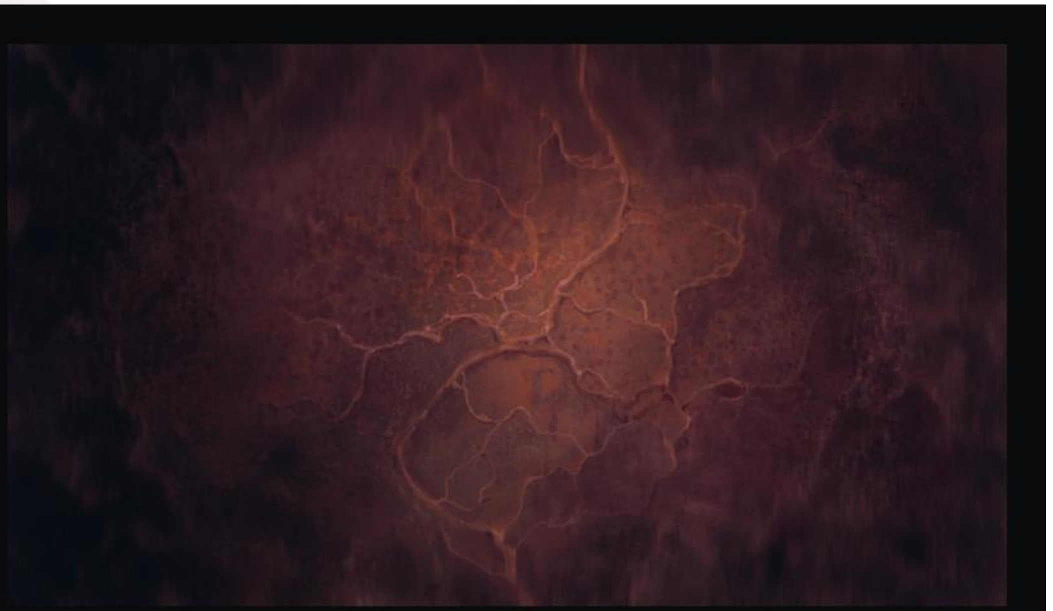
ABOVE Glowing red bellies situated within otherwise white reliefs and statues show how much Scorn's civilization is fascinated by the processes of conception, gestation, and birth.

OPPOSITE One of the most memorable shots from the 2020 Xbox Series X trailer involves this tap extending in segments like a xenomorph's inner jaw, venting mysterious liquid when fully elongated.





STORYBOARDS



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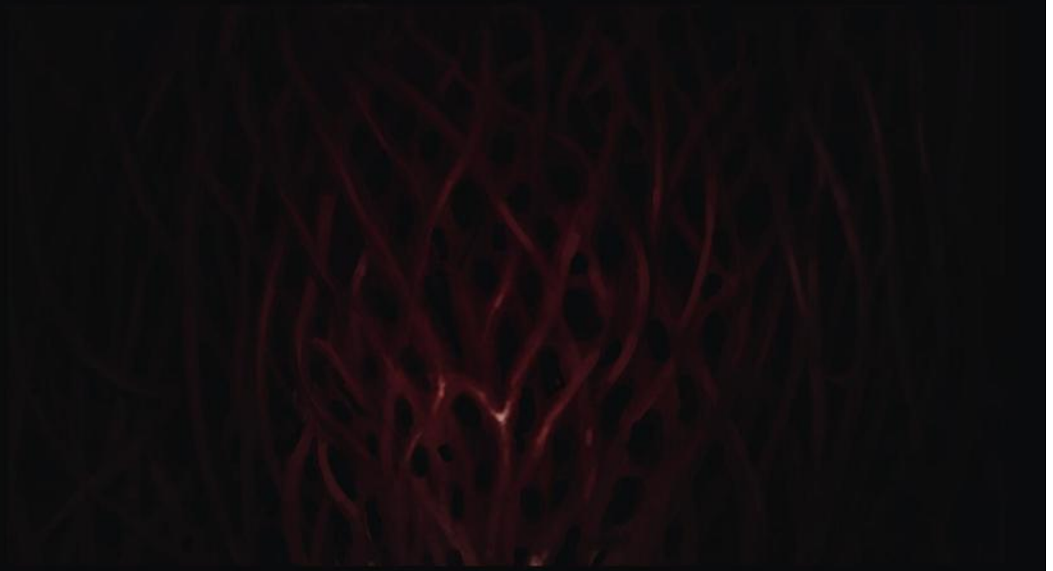

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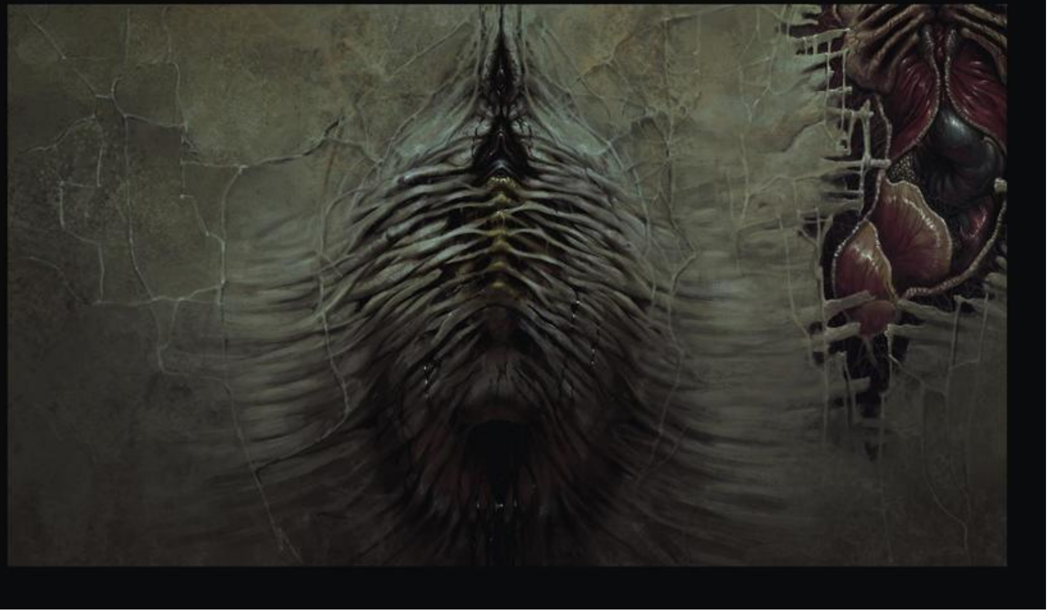

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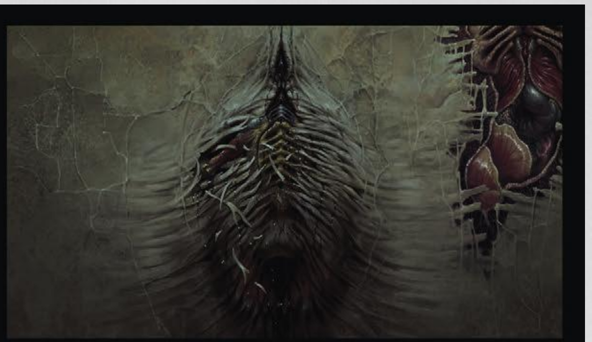

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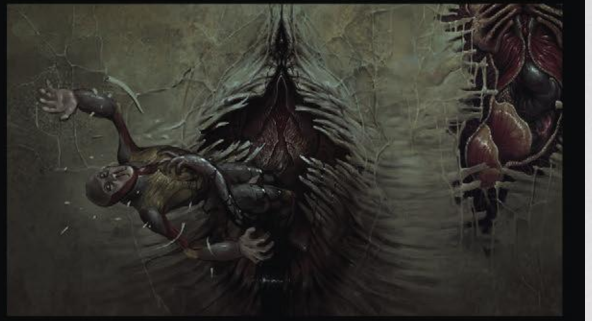

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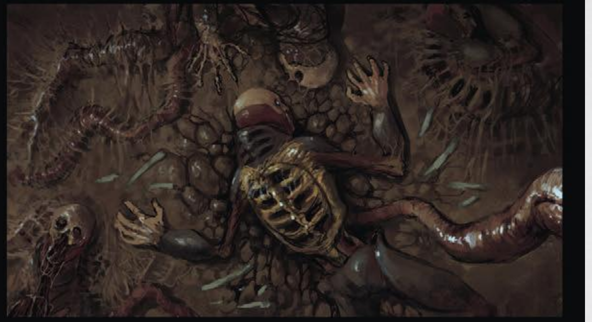

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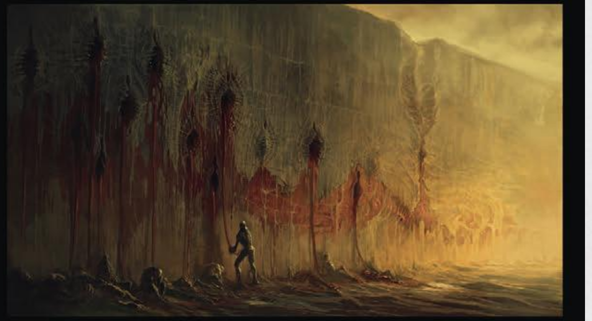

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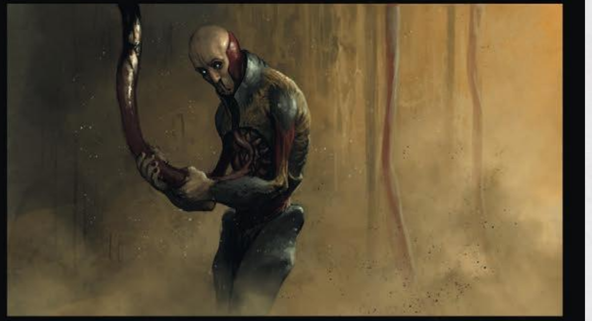

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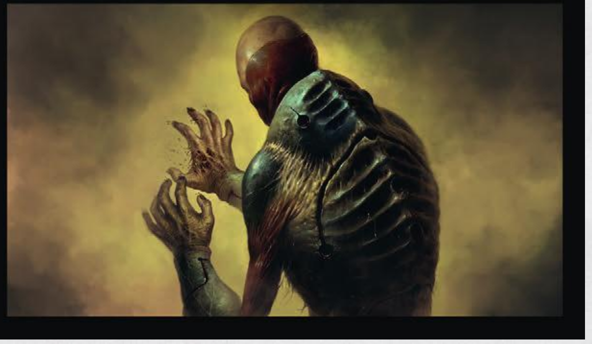

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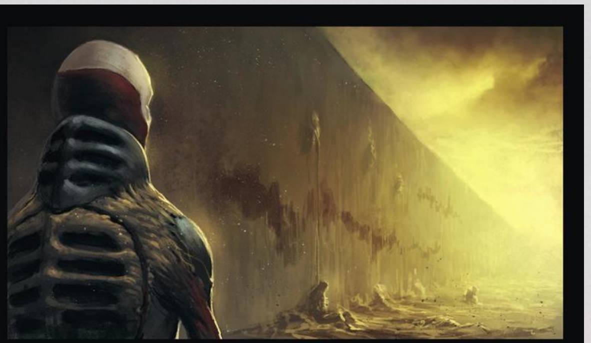

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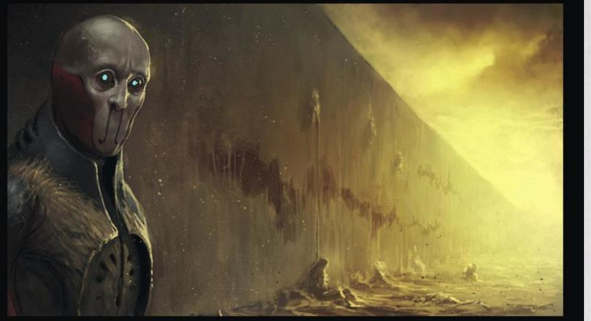

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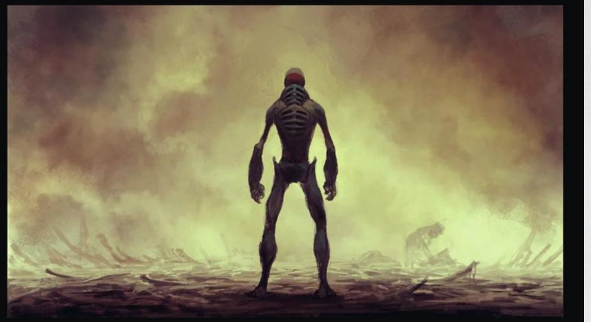

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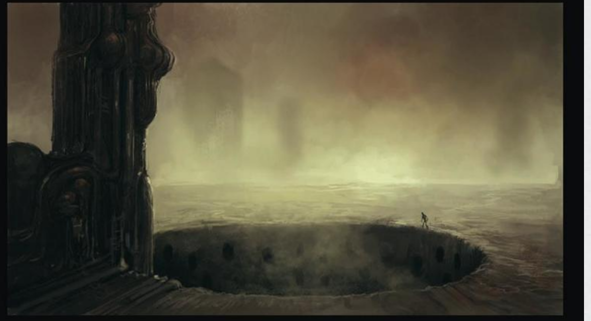

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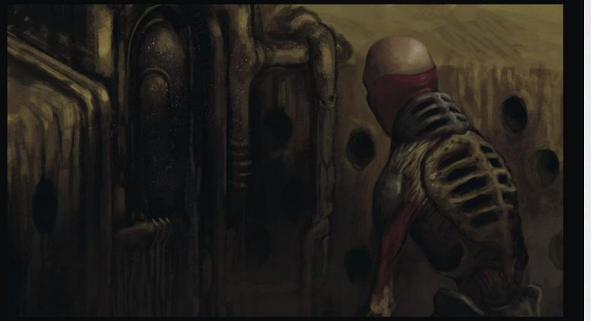

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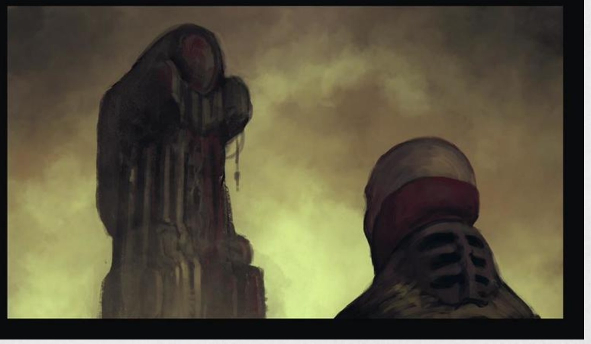

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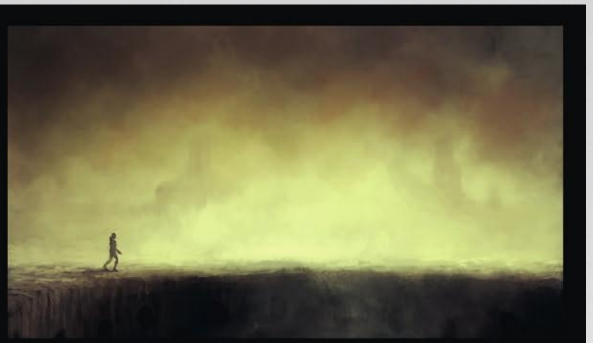
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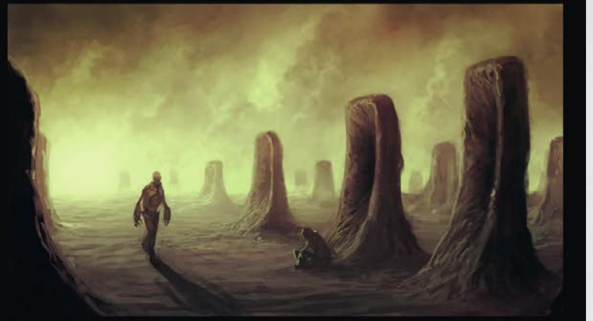
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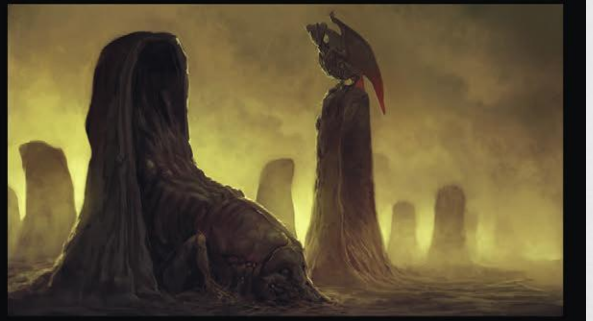
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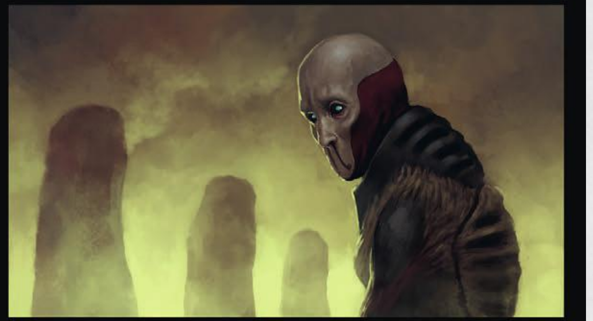
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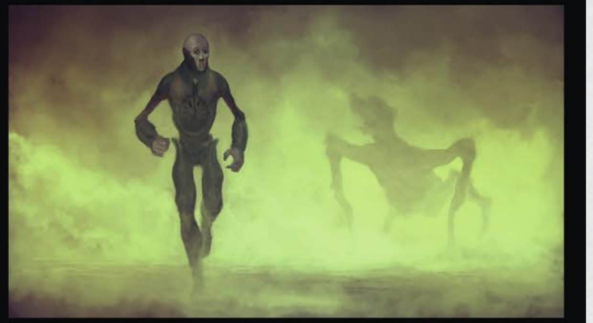
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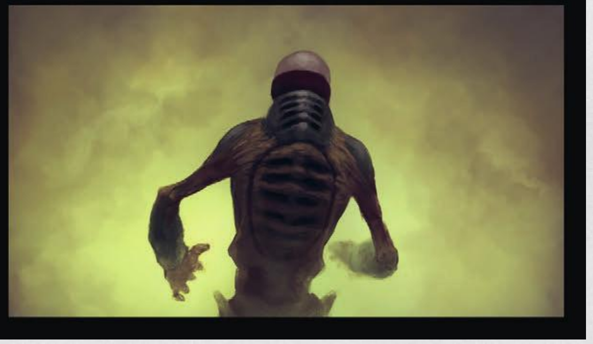
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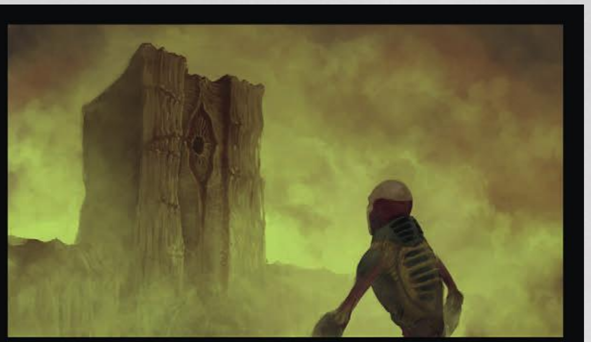
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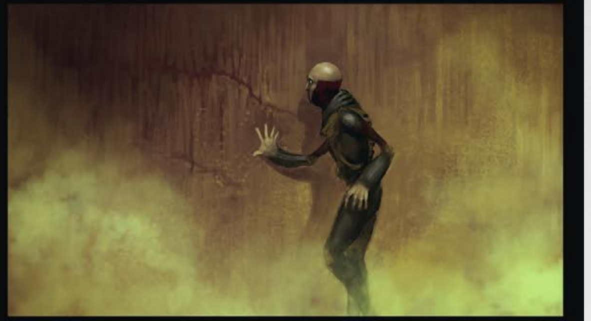
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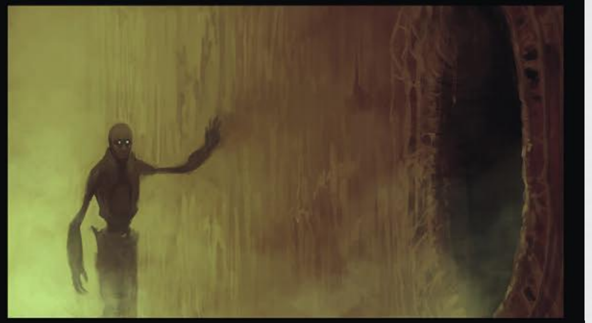
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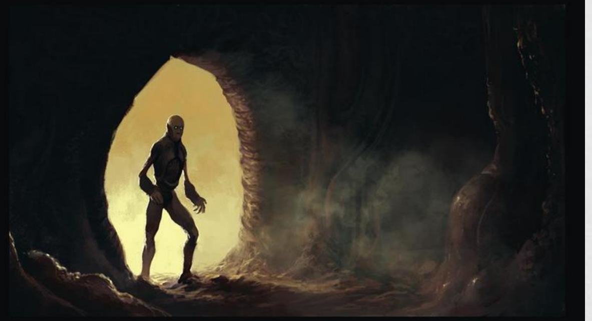
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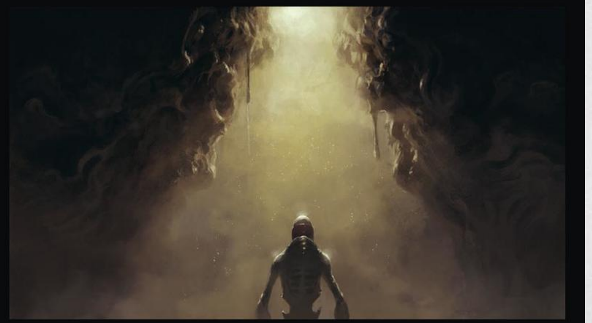
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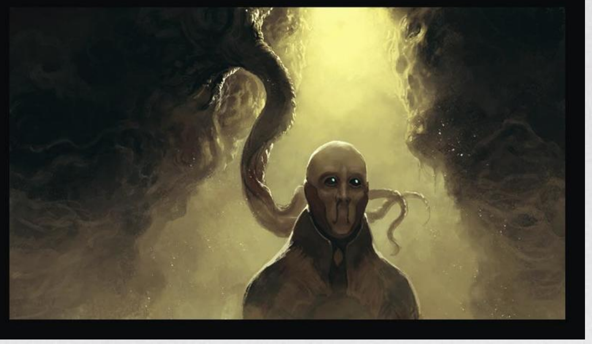
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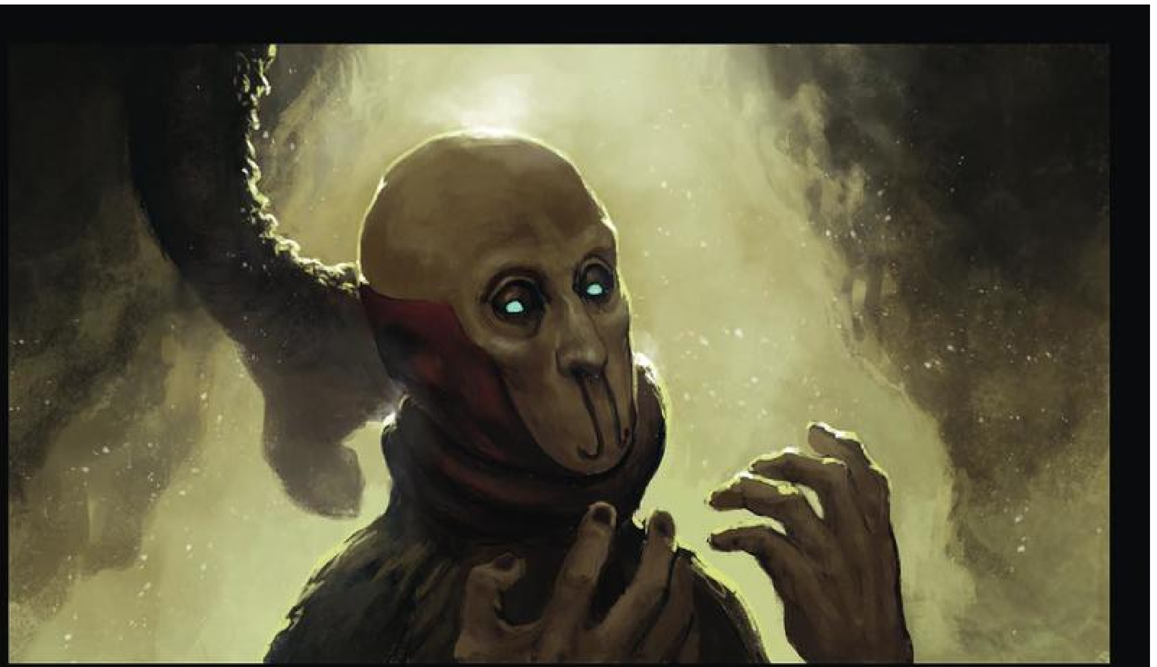
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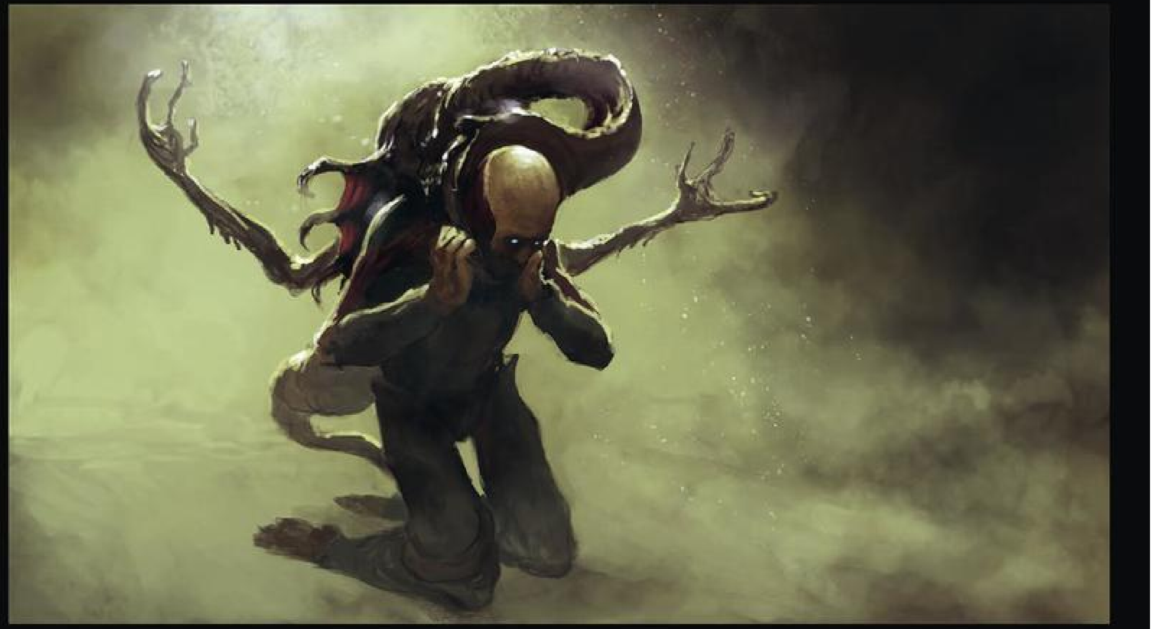
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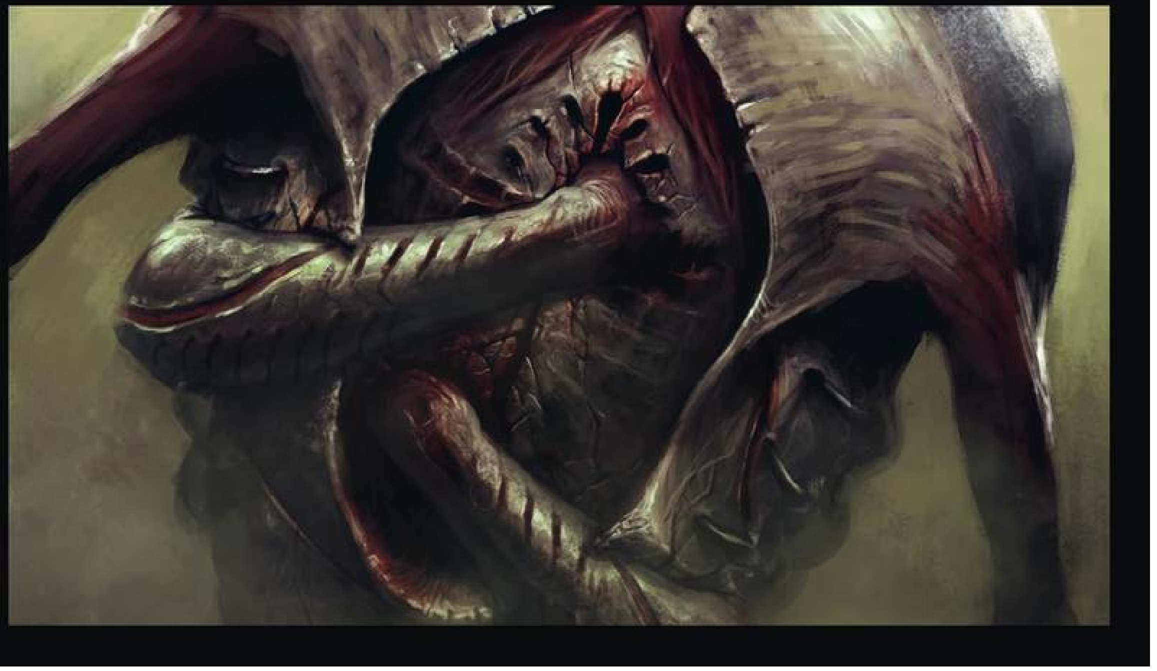
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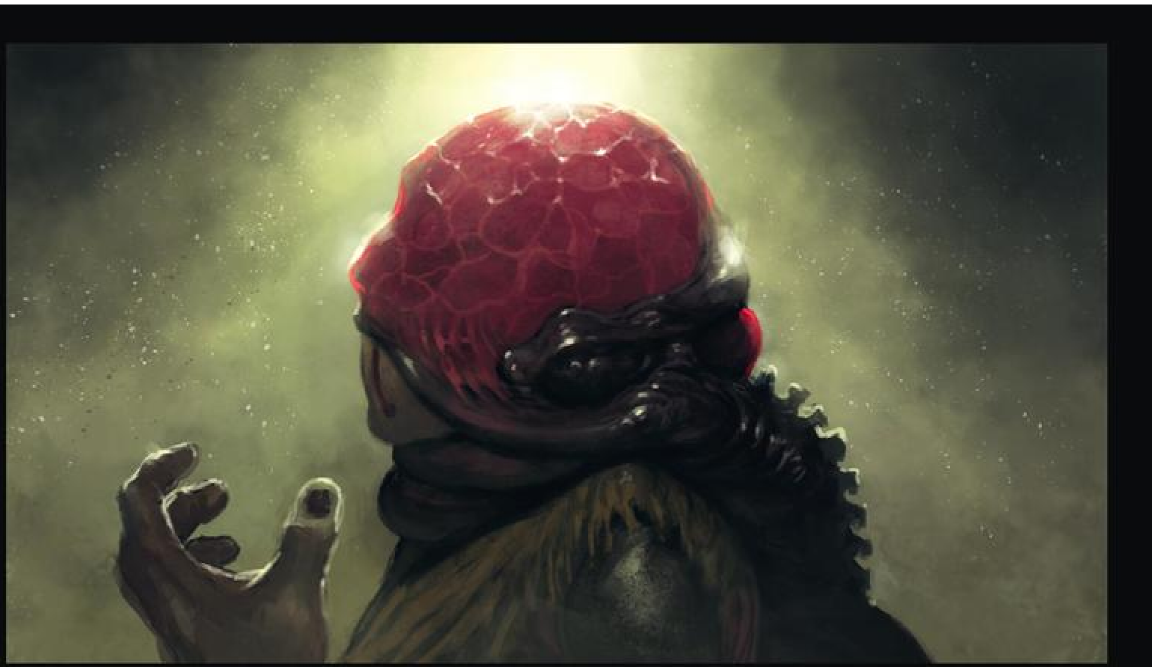

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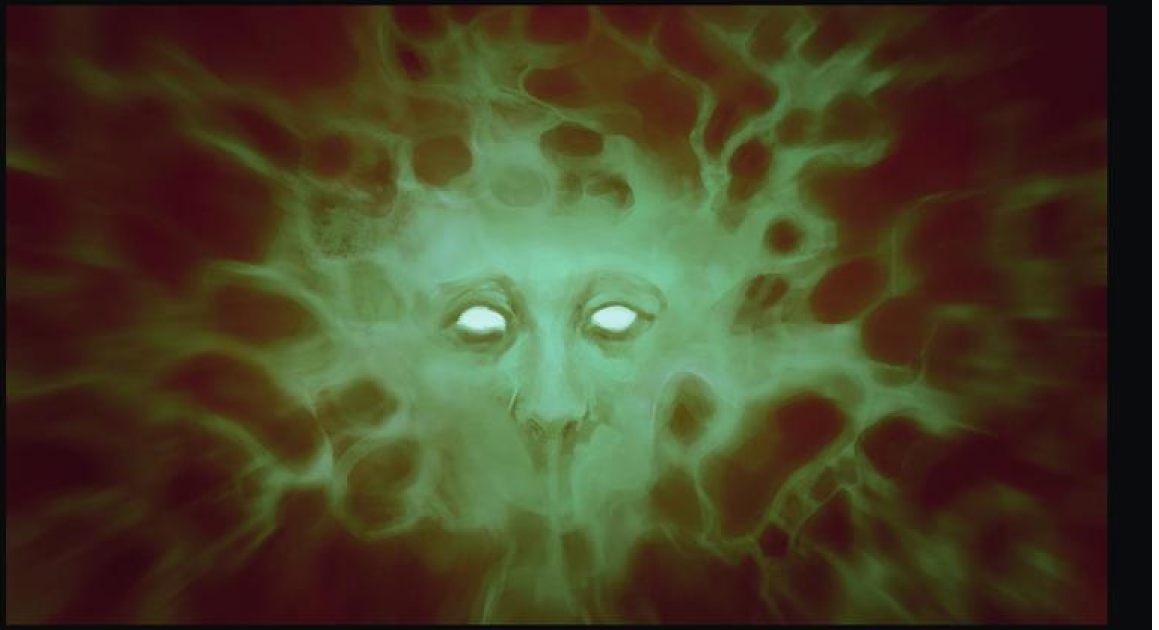

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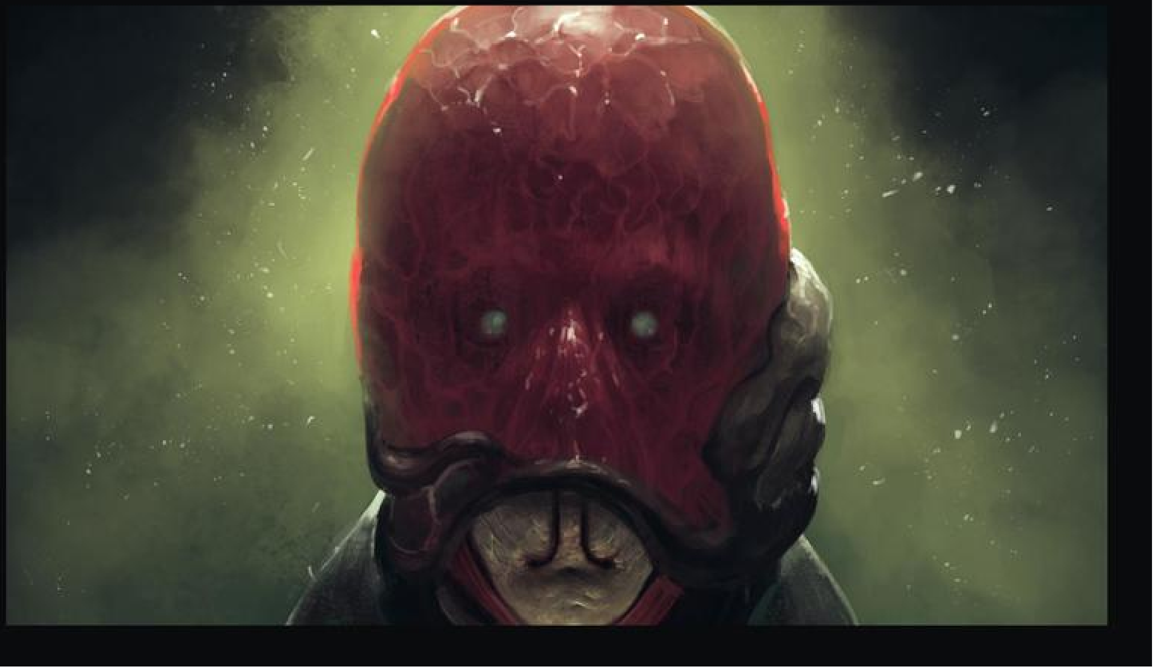

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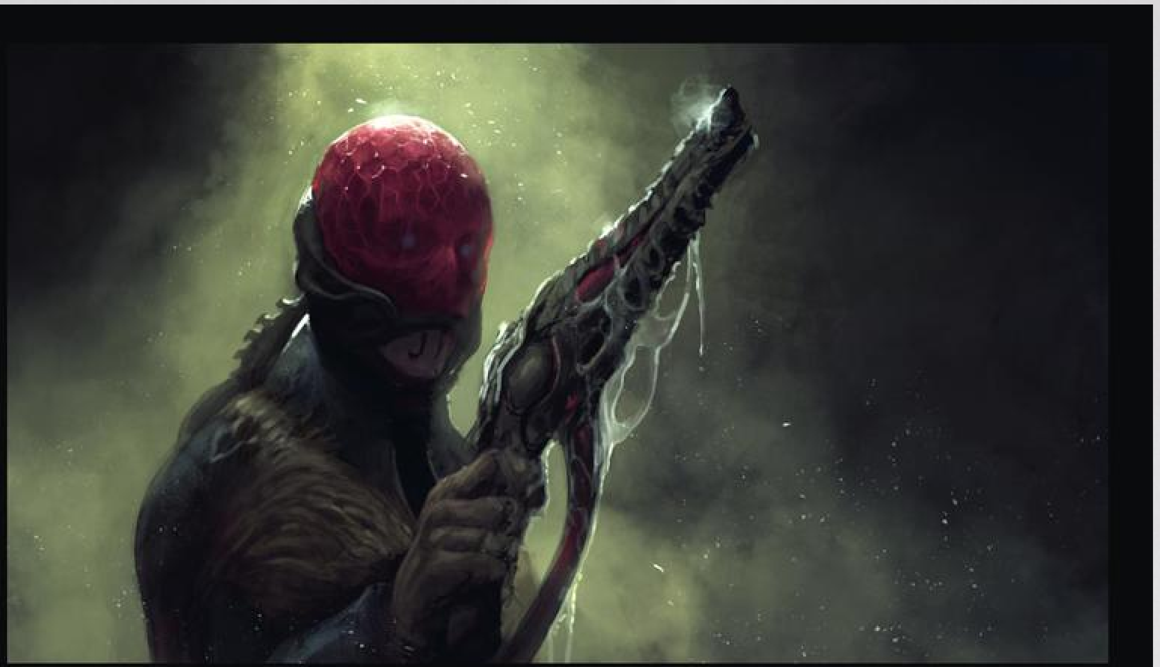

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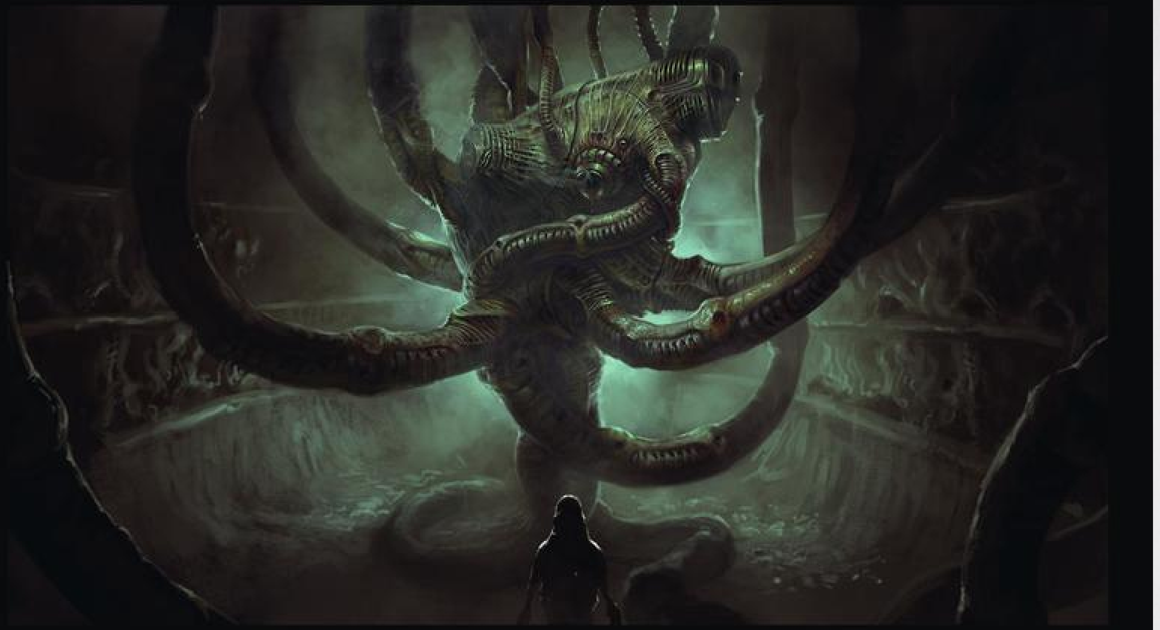

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